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DYNAMICS OF EATING HABITS OF SWEETS: GERMAN, POLISH, AND RUSSIAN CONSUMERS ON THE CONFECTIONERY MARKET

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STRESZCZENIE

DYNAMIKA NAWYKÓW ŻYWIENIOWYCH DOTYCZĄCYCH SŁODYCZY: NIEMIECCY, POLSCY I ROSYJSCY KONSUMENCI NA RYNKU SŁODYCZY

Anna Brack

Głównym celem niniejszej pracy jest wypełnienie luki badawczej w dotychczasowych studiach nad zachowaniami konsumentów na rynku spożywczym, a ściślej – rynku słodyczy. Badania miały charakter międzynarodowy, ponieważ zrealizowano je w trzech krajach: Niemczech, Polsce i Rosji, a ukończono wraz z analizą i interpretacją danych w styczniu 2022 r. Ponadto uwzględniono tzw. mega-segmenty konsumentów, w których kryterium podziału stanowi wiek nabywców. Skoncentrowano się na następujących pokoleniach: Baby Boomers, Generacja X, Generacja Y oraz Generacja Z. Aby osiągnąć założony cel, przeprowadzono na ww. rynkach badania wtórne i pierwotne, przy czym w przypadku empirycznych badań własnych zastosowano ankietę internetową jako metodę pomiaru. Uzyskane dane przeanalizowane zostały przy wykorzystaniu statystyki opisowej oraz analizy wariancji. Różnice wykryte przez analizę wariancji uściślone zostały testem *post hoc* Tukey'a. Weryfikując hipotezę o zrównoważonym charakterze produktu, który prowadzi do zwiększonej konsumpcji, przyjęto dwa czynniki grupujące: kraj i pokolenie, dla których przeprowadzono porównania parami. Dzięki zrealizowanym badaniom odkryto, iż wśród atrybutów słodyczy, cenionych przez nabywców, zrównoważony charakter konkretnego produktu nie ma dla nich znaczenia i takiej informacji nie poszukują. Konsumenci zwracają natomiast uwagę na zrównoważone metody prowadzenia działalności gospodarczej przez producentów.

Wyniki badań dostarczyły wniosku, że zwyczaje żywieniowe konsumentów w trzech ww. krajach są zbliżone, nie cechują się silną dynamiką, mają tradycyjny charakter, a

nabywcy preferują konwencjonalne wyroby, których forma zasadniczo nie ulega zmianie od kilkudziesięciu lat. Konsumenci doceniają tak pojmowaną stabilność tego rynku. O dokonaniu zakupu danego produktu decyduje głównie jego smak jako podstawowe kryterium wyboru. Z kolei pewne różnice dostrzeżono w zwyczajach przedstawicieli różnych pokoleń, identyfikując kategorie produktów preferowanych tylko przez młodszych uczestników rynku. Ponadto odkryto, że bardzo zróżnicowany asortyment słodyczy, zwłaszcza duża liczba produktów substytucyjnych utrudnia podejmowanie decyzji przez konsumentów, co może prowadzić do odczuwania dysonansu poznawczego.

Słowa kluczowe: Wybór konsumenta, dysonans kognitywny, rynek słodyczy,

zrównoważone procesy rynkowe

ABSTRACT

DYNAMICS OF EATING HABITS OF SWEETS: GERMAN, POLISH, AND RUSSIAN CONSUMERS ON THE CONFECTIONERY MARKET

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The major purpose of this work is to fill the research gap in the previous studies on consumer behavior in the food market, or more precisely - in the confectionery market. The research was international in nature because it was carried out in three countries: Germany, Poland, and Russia, and was completed with the analysis and interpretation of data in January 2022. Moreover, so called mega-segments of consumers were considered, in which the criterion of division is buyers' age. The focus was on the following generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. To achieve the assumed aim, desk and field research was carried out, while in the case of own empirical research, an online survey was used as a measurement method. The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and analysis of variance. The differences detected by the analysis of variance were refined with Tukey's *post hoc* test. When verifying the hypothesis about the sustainable nature of the product, which leads to increased consumption, two grouping factors were adopted: country and generation, for which pairwise comparisons were made. Owing to the conducted research, it was discovered that among the attributes of sweets, valued by buyers, the sustainable nature of a specific product is of no importance to them, and they do not seek such information. Consumers pay attention to sustainable methods of conducting business activity by producers.

The results of the studies provided the conclusion that the eating habits of consumers in the three above-mentioned countries are similar, are not characterized by strong dynamics, have a traditional character, and buyers prefer conventional products, the form of which has remained essentially unchanged for numerous years. Consumers appreciate the stability of this market understood in this way. The purchase of a given product is mainly determined by its taste as the basic selection criterion. On the other hand, some differences were noticed in the habits of representatives of different generations, identifying categories of products preferred only by younger market participants. In addition, it was found that a very diverse assortment of sweets, especially many substitute products, complicate consumer decisions, which can lead to a feeling of cognitive dissonance.

Keywords: Consumer choice, cognitive dissonance, confectionery market, sustainable market processes

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My greatest heartfelt thanks go to my most beloved ones.
You are my motor and give me strength.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Participation and presentation at the conference in Łódź.
9th Scientific Conference: Family Businesses, Social Academy of Sciences in Łódź; Universidad Tecnologica de Escuinapa, Mexico; EEDRI Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Research Institute in Łódź; Łódź, Poland, May 21-23, 2019; paper title: Communicating Company Values - a Case Study of the Family Enterprise August Storck KG /co-authors: A. Nikodemska-Wołowik, A. Brack, A. Marjański/.

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INTRODUCTION

Research background and knowledge gap

The behavior of consumers on the micro level changed slowly related to changes in business operations. Businesses must be agile and respond faster to market changes and consumer needs and demands (Solomon, 2012). The numbers of globally acting companies continue to rise as a consequence of increasingly saturated domestic markets. This dissertation incorporates such observations and investigates consumers' preferences that have changed, thereby leading to changes. The focus is the confectionery market as this industry produces and offers products that are non-essential; consumers do not require them for survival or to meet their basic needs, but they certainly make life more enjoyable. The confectionery industry is subject to food law. This regulates what may be called "confectionery" and which ingredients must be included, and in what proportion. In Germany, for example, these regulations can be found on the website of the Federal Association of the German Confectionery Industry (BDSI). This shows that the industry divides confectionery into seven categories: First, chocolate, chocolate products, and cocoa; second, fine baked goods; third, sweets and sugar confectionery; fourth, snacks; fifth, branded ice cream; sixth, chewing gum; and seventh, raw masses ("Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie e.V.," n.d.). These categories were found to be a good orientation to study the other two countries, accordingly.

Confectionery is both in an inexpensive segment but can also be purchased at a high price. It is left to the consumer, depending on disposable income, to decide which price level to choose. These consumer goods are therefore particularly interesting for investigating the background to purchasing decisions. While consumers have little choice in luxury goods, which are rarely found at low price levels, they do have a choice in confectionery. In addition, the products themselves play an important role regarding further investigations; this aspect is mentioned because it leads to greater complexity in the production process ("Inventory management and production planning and scheduling," 1999). Following this line of research, consumers' eating habits also play an essential role. The companies that produce these items must be able to forecast potential buying incentives and which trend or trends to follow. However, implementing new production capacities is time-consuming, and it can be a while before they are available for physical production and, thereby, lead to a profit (Boysen, Fliedner, & Scholl, 2007; Mula, Poler, García-Sabater, & Lario, 2006; Ward, 2011). The development of the two, consumers' buying decisions and production capacity, runs asynchronously. To reduce this gap, the eating habits of German, Polish, and Russian consumers are further investigated. The aim is to investigate how to summarize the preferences of market participants in the food industry to generate the highest-possible sales through existing production processes.

Previous marketing approaches show that diversity is key to international reach and must be adopted according to the target group (Balick et al., 2016; Golden, Doney, Johnson, & Smith, 1995). When it comes to technology, for example, the most important medium is television, followed by the internet. With the help of these two channels, it is possible to reach the consumer on a broad level. The adaptation to foreign markets is comparatively quite simple and is therefore most often used. As an add-on, this marketing approach saves money, as it does not require separate country-specific campaigns. In this context, costs must allow the manufacturer to act competitively. This means that any cost-cutting measures are applied if possible. Production facilities are relocated to China, for example, where raw materials and personnel costs barely approach Western levels. Worth mentioning are worldwide market opportunities, which allow for the target group outside national borders. If the market on the doorstep is saturated, this is another way to create sales opportunities. When it comes to international activities, the literature brings the EPRG (Ethnocentric, Polycentric, Regiocentric, and Geocentric) framework into play. This deals with the strategic decisions within a company and the efforts to deploy them internationally (Shoham, 2015; Wind, Douglas, & Perlmutter, 1973). There are four approaches to this, which serve different criteria. At this point, they are briefly presented, because country-specific production does not lead to increased demand for confectionery. The findings from the survey showed no correlation in this food segment.

Returning to the approaches from international marketing, the ethnocentric orientation is mentioned first. It states that the market in which the company is located is the one that represents the basis for further actions, with all other markets merely having similarities. The polycentric approach, on the other hand, deals with the respective differences of the countries and emphasizes these in the marketing activity. In the regiocentric approach, similarities of several countries are sought to then place them against the rest of the world. Finally, there is the geocentric approach. This considers the whole world as a potential market and does not distinguish individual countries (Barat, 2009; Wilson, 2021). Following this last approach, the present study also investigated whether country-specific differences play a role in the marketing of confectionery and whether aspects incorporated into sales activities led to desired success (additional sales). It was found that the confectionery market is traditional and country-specific marketing does not lead to increased sales.

The markets were chosen for several reasons; they are neighboring countries located in Europe. Geographic proximity may lead to the assumption that similar marketing strategies may work equally well in all three, however, current approaches show that the markets are processed market-specifically (Cateora, Gilly, & Graham, 2011; Mennicken, 2000). Examining this approach more closely is important. If country-specific approaches could be replaced by product-specific advantages, confectionery sales might then lead to higher profits. The present study focuses on markets in proximity to each other. There is a knowledge gap as to whether and to what extent these three markets differ in terms of confectionery consumption. There are findings from other areas of the industry but none specific to the confectionery market and studies are rare in the international context (Çağlayan & Astar, 2013; Hartmann, Nitzko, & Spiller, 2017; Maciejewski, Mokrysz, & Wróblewski, 2019).

Setting up marketing instruments more broadly would mean streamlining country-specific activities. This, in turn, means that cost-savings would be achieved. Here, the goal is to reduce the complexity of product development and increase the predictability of purchasing behavior so production factories could forecast the most-effective production-plant investments.

Multinational producers have to adapt to changes in eating habits of target groups to predict market development. Increasingly, retailers note that consumers are placing a strong emphasis on attributes such as sustainability and that the “fair trade” label plays an important role in their incentive to buy (Bilska, Tomaszewska, & Kołożyn-Krajewska, 2019; Denison, Lief, & Ward, 2004; Maciejewski et al., 2019). However, equally observed is a discrepancy between a consumer's personal attitude towards the topic of "sustainability" and how he or she behaves as a consumer in the market (Witek, 2019). In general, the topic of sustainability, in times of climate change and the resulting natural consequences, plays an increasingly important role (Janssen, 2018; Meffert, 1993). At this point, the focus shall be placed on food and especially on confectionery, because this is the core of the present work. There have been many studies on how consumers relate to sustainability in relation to food (Borusiak & Kucharska, 2020; Rudawska, 2018). It should also be mentioned that this research largely revolves around food consumed in everyday life rather than confectionery. These were, for example, meat, vegetables or in general, textiles, or clothes (Koszewska, 2013; Rolling, Seifert, Chattaraman, & Sadachar, 2021). In this connection, the different labels on the part of the manufacturers are brought into connection. The so-called Eco-label is intended to suggest to the consumer that goods purchased have been produced or at least grown in a sustainable manner. Whether or not this labeling leads to increased consumption has also been discussed in the literature (D'Souza, Taghian, & Lamb, 2006; Wuepper, Wree, & Ardali, 2019). According to the findings, even if the consumer generally supports sustainability in his or her attitude, he or she often finds him or herself in a frustrating situation. This is due to the usually higher price of sustainably-produced products and to the labeling itself. There are many different labels and consumers are not aware of their meaning or distinguishing features of everyday products (Aertsens, Verbeke, Mondelaers, & van Huylenbroeck, 2009; Bostan, Onofrei, Gavriluță, Toderascu, & Lazăr, 2019; D'Souza et al., 2006; Golob, Kos Koklic, Podnar, & Zabkar, 2018).

Another aspect of the present work deals with the overabundance of packaging design, which leads consumers to believe there is variety in flavors, or at least, in quality (Ankiel & Grzybowska-Brzezińska, 2020; Bou-Mitri, Abdessater, Zgheib, & Akiki, 2021; Hassan, A.,A., E & Mostafa, H., M., 2018). It is suggested that different designs represent a difference from the standard content. However, this strategy may lead to cognitive dissonance. Leon Festinger, who published his work, "A theory of cognitive dissonance" in 1957 (Cooper & Carlsmith, 2015; Festinger, 1957; Morvan & O'Connor, 2017). posited that humans can leave quite unhappily from a decision or purchase situation, if factors come together to create this. These factors, Festinger continued, can be two relevant elements relevant. However, if two factors contradict, he speaks of so-called dissonance. The consumer will therefore look for reasons and arguments to decide for himself that will *frustrate him the least*, should the decision prove to be wrong in the end. The present work tried to follow this very approach, in the question of the prevailing packaging variety in confectionery. It was substantiated that an oversupply leads to frustration and is by no means desired by consumers (Cooper & Carlsmith, 2015; Morvan & O'Connor, 2017; Pillai, 2021; Tang, Hsieh, & Chiu, 2017).

Study goal, research questions and hypotheses

The major goal of present study is deepening the understanding of consumer behavior dynamics on the international confectionery market, perceived from two perspectives: theoretical, filling the gaps in the prior research on this field; and managerial, showing practical aspects of the investigation results.

In the context, consumers' preferences and their influence on purchase decisions regarding confectionery products are essential. Moreover, in this study the differences are considered in three target buyer groups: German, Polish, and Russian. Knowledge about the consumers themselves is therefore crucial. Thus, this dissertation seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: What motivates consumers to buy confectionery items, with regard to the sustainability concept?
Related to H1 (given below)

RQ 2: What are the consumer preferences regarding a country criterion?
Related to H2

RQ 3: How have taste preferences in consumer segments changed over time?
Related to H3

RQ 4: How do the consumers perceive a wide range of confectionery that may result in cognitive dissonance?
Related to H4

To investigate whether country-specific marketing activities make sense when several countries are combined, confectionery preferences within the German, Polish, and Russian confectionery markets were another focus. Through this aim and to narrow the knowledge gap at this point, the following hypotheses (H) were formulated (considering that RQs embrace more aspects than Hs and refer substantially to desk research).

H1 Sustainable production of confectionery goods leads to increased consumption.

H2 A country-specific production does not lead to higher demand for confectionery products.

H3 An orientation on age clusters (generations) does not lead to higher demand of confectionery products.

H4 Consumers feel overwhelmed by the packaging variety.

The remainder of this work is structured as follows. Chapter 1 explores these questions with a literature review and begins with the consumption of goods. Strategies were examined and models created to determine the impact lifestyles have on international business frames (Cateora et al., 2011; Hofstede, 1984). Most studies have focused on professional areas, e.g., the economy, and chose a macro perspective; this paper seeks to contribute to this line of research using a microeconomic perspective, placing an emphasis on the individual consumer. Therefore, the consumption of goods is analyzed in historical data, with the focal point as the consumer. Various authors have stated that strategies based on cultural impacts do not work as well as first believed (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2015; Kravets, Maclaran, Miles, & Venkatesh, 2018). The reasons for this insight were analyzed to demonstrate that there are, indeed, united preferences that can be used to predict one's actions on the market. This lack of information was examined to aim for an appropriate statement regarding predictable consumer behavior related to confectionery goods.

Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 1 is subdivided into micro- and macro-level approach, selected theories of consumer behavior, consumer trends, and habits triggered by the industry, the problem of choice and consumer mega-segments. Here, the target group of German, Polish, and Russian consumers is classified by age to summarize findings that can be superimposed on theories regarding generations and their characteristics. Age clusters reveal differences between generations (Berkup, 2014). This section, concentrating on the consumer, includes theories about purchasing decisions derived from a microeconomic perspective. These help to explain the mechanisms elicited by actions the buyer triggers on the market. The idea behind this introducing structure was that the view from the macro perspective via the view of the development of the country structure would more closely describe the consumer, and to follow this idea, an investigation of the dynamics of the German, Polish, and Russian confectionery markets is provided. Since the focus lies in the confectionery industry, the dynamics of eating habits related to confectionery goods are investigated for each market in Chapter 2. After introducing the specifics of the confectionery market in general, the remainder of this chapter focuses on the dynamics of the markets under study. Current insights are discussed to enable a confrontation of the theories with the outcome of this work. Statistical reports underline the current situation and build a solid base that represents the frame for further investigations. To avoid giving the impression that the markets are mentioned in a judgmental order, alphabetical order is always used (**G**erman, **P**olish, **R**ussian).

Chapter 3 provides the research methodology of the empirical part. The research looks at consumer behavior within the confectionery industry in the German, Polish, and Russian markets. The aim of this study was to show, using the example of confectionery goods, how eating habits steer purchasing decisions. A survey was conducted in the respective markets to determine product attribute preferences, and surprising and sobering results are revealed and analyzed. The results are placed in the context of current research, and finally, suggestions for a new market segmentation are offered.

Chapter 4 presents insights to consumers in the three confectionery markets in the light of empirical research findings and contains the steps and results of the conducted survey, the main part being the statistical analysis. The items used in the questionnaire were devised to evaluate which preferences exist for confectionery items and how these have developed in the past. Data are analyzed through analysis of variance (ANOVA) and tested through the Tukey post hoc test. Here, where the focus lies when it comes to purchasing decisions for or against confectionery products is parsed. Product attributes were queried to gain new insights to apply marketing strategies in a targeted manner. The aim is that common preferences lead to more-efficient production planning and that production capacities can ultimately be deployed in such a way that maximum output is achieved while, at the same time, market demand is met. Besides an overview of the age categories of the participants, their economic conditions have been summarized. Finally, the verification of hypotheses represents the core part of this chapter, and a summary presents the results after each sub-chapter.

Chapter 5 deals with the discussion and research implications. Insights are summarized according to the findings of the survey. Major findings are compared to secondary data sources connected to a scientific discussion. Another subdivision of this chapter is made under the aspects of theoretical and managerial implications.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the work and provides limitations of the study, followed by a subsection of suggestions for future research. Ultimately, it is Chapter 6 that wraps up the findings from the knowledge gained about market differences and similarities in consumer behavior, so that marketing strategies can be developed for the realization of entrepreneurial competitive advantages based on suitable adaptations for differences in lifestyles.

The following figure no. 1 presents a condensed structure of this work.

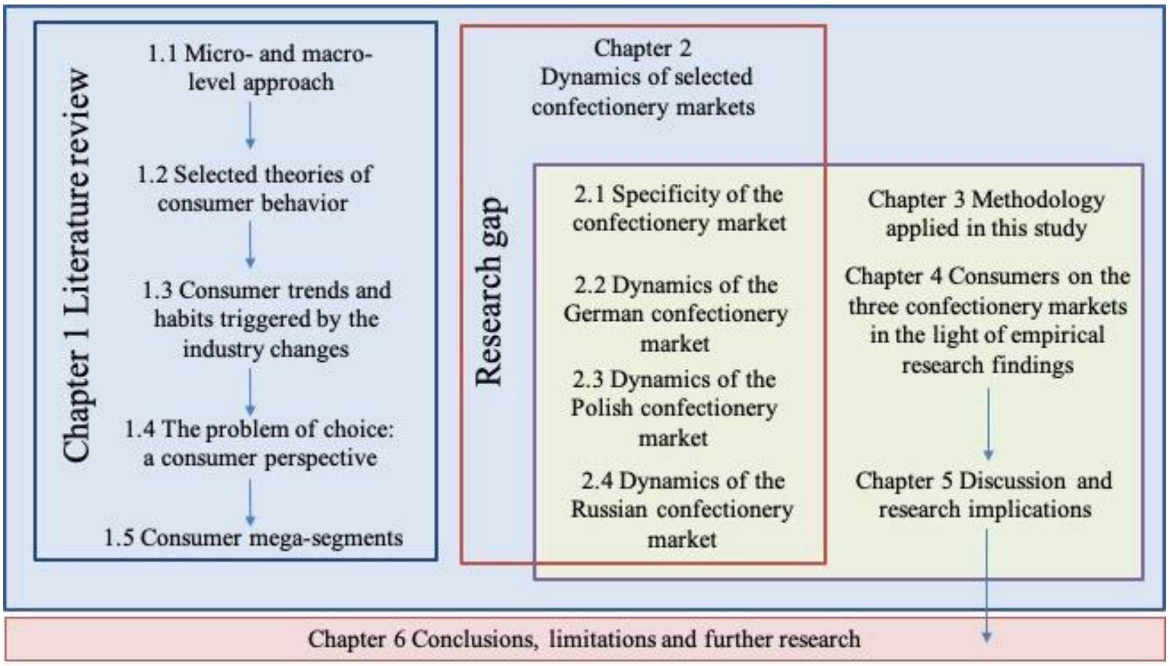


Figure 1. Structure of the dissertation

Source: Own elaboration

The main focus of this study—both desk and field research—is on the 21st century (until the year 2021), however some fundamental theories originate from previous decades. The considerations included in this study were closed and the analyses completed in January 2022. The phenomena in this work are considered from a neutral observer's perspective, with a minor shift toward the supply side of the market (mainly manufacturers).

CHAPTER 1
LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Micro- and macro-level approach

The decision about what proportion of disposable income is used for consumption affects more than the microeconomic level of individual household consumption. It has great macroeconomic importance (Krugman & Wells, 2018, p. 320). Private household consumption makes up a significant share of gross domestic product (GDP) and influences the overall economic situation (Krugman & Wells, 2018, p. 189ff.). How private households make their consumption decisions and the influencing factors that play a role in these decisions are relevant questions for the development and welfare of an economy. Figure 2, "An expanded circular-flow diagram: Flows of money through the economy," comes from the book, Macroeconomics (Krugman & Wells, 2018, p. 189). Accordingly, it describes a circular flow of money and its effect on the economy. The consumption of goods, no matter how small, influences the macroeconomic system extrapolated. The consequences and effects are displayed in a simple way in the picture, but sufficiently demonstrate the cycle. It is a somewhat basic overview, but it makes visible how income and expenditure are correlated. To provide a more-detailed view, the work at hand with the title "Dynamics of Eating Habits of Sweets: German, Polish, and Russian Consumers on the Confectionery Market" concentrates on a perspective from the micro level, whereas an overview of the macroeconomic theories is inevitable (Wachtel, 1989; Wykoff, 1979).

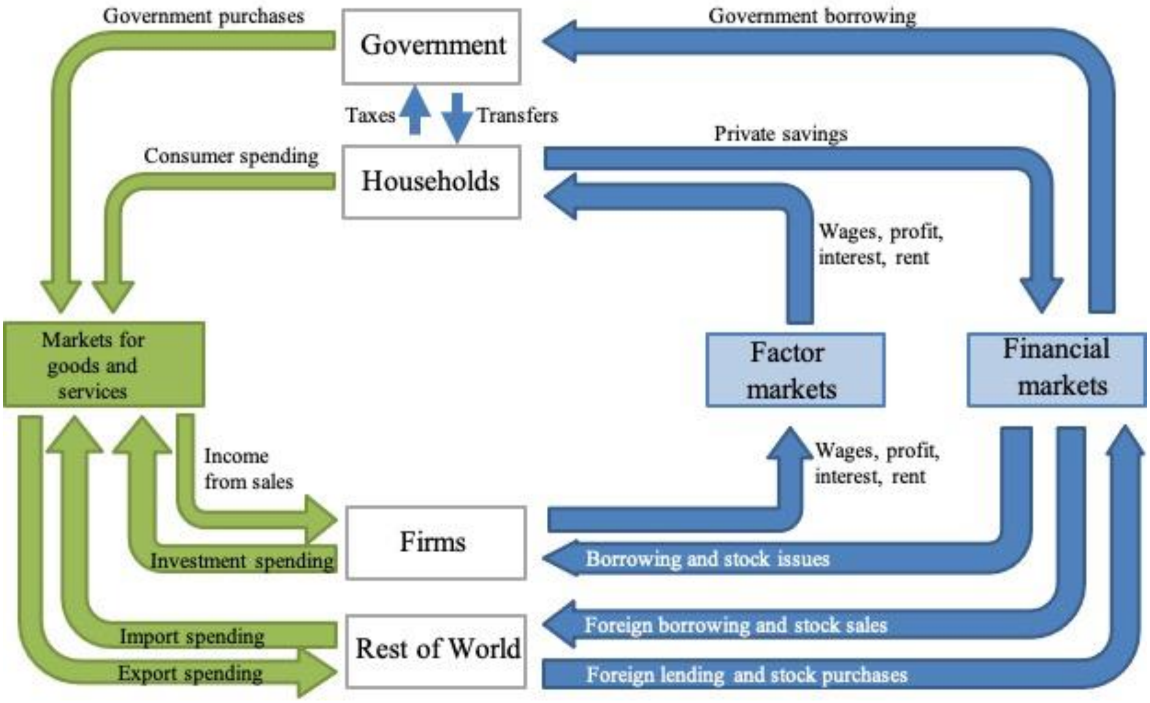


Figure 2. “An expanded circular-flow diagram: Flows of money through the economy”, based on Krugman and Wells

Source: Krugman, P., & Wells, R. (2018). *Macroeconomics*. New York: Worth Publishers. Page 189.

In economics, the consumption function is a behavioral equation that describes the relationship between consumption and income. In addition to income, other influencing variables such as wealth or interest can be included in the consumption function. There are different assumptions for macroeconomic consumption functions; these differ with respect to the influencing variables involved and, in the periods considered. Consumption on the microeconomic level, however, is the view that finds an application in the present work. The consumption of goods is the goal of successful business management within the food industry and, therefore, forms one of the supporting columns within theories of purchasing behavior. Thus, consumer behavior and decisions about consumption play a remarkable role and have, historically, transformed into a revolutionary development. According to Engels, the emergence of private property was connected with a new form of family, which was also a new form of organization of socialization. While consumption was previously satisfied according to need, it was now a question of individual preferences and the necessities of a good for the family, and both were determined by the woman of the household, whereas the man’s role was to provide these goods (Engels, 1884, p. 221). Especially taking only the system “family” into consideration, consumption nowadays far exceeds the simple satisfaction of needs. Engels' theories, based on Marxian economics, address the analysis of crisis in capitalism, the role and distribution of the surplus product and surplus value in different economic systems, the nature and origin of economic value, the impact of class and class struggle on economic and political processes, and the process of economic revolution. Creating a bridge or making a transition to today's world, it becomes obvious that the theory on consumption rooted in Engels's observations is more complicated to apply than it has ever been. The theory of consumer choice is one model. There are individuals making decisions unconsciously, but there is a unique aspect of action: "Consumers are aware that their choices are constrained by their financial resources. And given those constraints, they do the best they can to achieve the highest level of satisfaction" (Mankiw, 2015, p. 457). Two factors are necessary to analyze consumers' choices: budget constraints (what they can afford) and preferences (what they want to spend their money on). In microeconomic terms, consumers want to end up with the best possible combination of goods, that is, a combination of their highest possible indifference curve and at or below their budgetary constraints.

"We are all Keynesians now," Richard Nixon, the US president at the time, said more than three decades ago. Today, his words would again meet with approval. Likewise, the ideas of John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) have experienced a comeback. Politicians refer to him when they pass economic stimulus programs, and there are many references to his theories in science. Born the son of an economics professor in Cambridge, Keynes experienced how helplessly economists faced the global economic crisis of the early 1930s (Robert, 2003), and his observations shaped his research. In 1936, his book, "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money" was published. He interpreted the crisis as a situation in which the economy could not help itself in the short term. He noted that a downward spiral would develop if people stopped consuming out of concern for the future and companies did not invest despite low interest rates. In such a situation, Keynes said, the state must become active and create jobs (Keynes, 1936). Thus, one can still learn something from the Keynesian compulsion to control: personal responsibility and prudence in managing one's own budget, whether on a personal or national level, instead of blind trust in the self-healing powers of the market.

Another who contributed to revolutionary knowledge in the field of economics was Milton Friedman (1912–2006), one of the greatest economists of the last century. His intensive examination of Keynesian economics and its counter-theses have divided economic science but have also promoted diverse discussions. As an advocate of the market economy, he had a lasting influence on the science of economics. He is best known as the founder and main representative of monetarist theory, but Friedman was much more than a pure monetary theorist, and even his monetary theory is an attempt to contrast Keynesian theory with a more microeconomic concept. Above all, he criticized Keynesian theory for its short-term orientation and because the recommended expansive monetary and fiscal policy can be effective only if economic actors are permanently misled. Instead of a short-term economic theory, he favored a long-term, rule-based economic policy (Friedman & Friedman, 1998). Apart from income, Keynes named further factors influencing consumption, which he divided into objective and subjective factors. Subjective factors include the following reasons: reserves (for unplanned expenses, or for retirement); asset building; financial independence; and capital for future investments. Keynes did not attach too much importance to the subjective factors since he took them as given and largely static and, therefore, likely to be relevant only in a long-term view. Objective factors, by contrast, are related to investment spending (and not consumer spending): interest rate; expected future level of GDP; and production capacity.

Friedman's first major field of interest was consumer theory. Initially, the focus was on empirical questions and included a study on the income budget of consumers written for the National Resources Committee in Washington (Ebenstein, 2007). Friedman stated in his work "A Theory of the Consumption Function" (Friedman, 1957) that consumption calls for more than taking into consideration the income for a certain period. His hypothesis of permanent income reflects that private households base their consumption decisions on their permanent income, e.g., the average lifetime income. In his macroeconomic view of expectations and consumer demand for a longer period, the temporary assumptions made in the investment-savings/liquidity preference–money supply model (IS–LM model), for example, are no longer of use. Rather, there are various income hypotheses that attempt to make valid forecasts using different approaches. According to one assumption, private households do not make their consumption decisions on the basis of their short-term disposable income but on the basis of their permanent income. Permanent income is the average income per period that a household expects to earn over a longer time. The conclusion of the above-mentioned points, then, is that temporary, short-term changes in consumer income have only a minor impact on consumer spending, while permanent changes in income can have a greater impact on consumer behavior. Like the life cycle hypothesis, the permanent income hypothesis is a further development of the Keynesian consumption function.

This hypothesis may explain why consumption incentives for households through tax cuts do not have the effects on aggregate demand predicted by Keynesian theory. In Keynesian theory, in fact, the propensity to consume is included as a constant. This means that a household puts the same proportion of each additional euro of disposable income into consumption. In contrast to this, the hypothesis of permanent income is based on the marginal affinity to consume. Correspondingly, a one-time increase in income will lead to lower effects because households spread their profits over a longer time (Ebenstein, 2007; Friedman & Friedman, 1998). Nowadays, parts of both theories are criticized, because while Keynes' rapid government financial assistance caused the debt mountain to grow ever larger, the national economy could not absorb this discrepancy quickly enough. Resentment therefore grew among the population. Friedman's monetarism approach of letting the market economy regulate itself was also not fully accepted in the long run. One of the reasons is that money flowing into increased consumption via credit leads to increases in production, but not in output and income, as it is the case with business investments (Drakopoulos, 2016; Meghir, 2004; Niechoj, 2015).

Generally, theories on consumption show a current relevance for economic policy, which results, in particular, from the fact that consumption by private households is a significant economic determining factor in the interaction of supply and demand of goods, income, and employment. Consumption, therefore, plays a key role in the economic policy factor of reviving the economy. According to Keynes, the state can, for example, use premiums, subsidies, or taxes in a targeted manner to offer private households indirect consumption incentives, which, when aggregated, have a positive effect on the demand for consumer goods and, thus, on investment and employment. Friedman assumed that economic agents want to keep their consumption constant throughout their lives and rely on savings, borrowing, and investment opportunities to do so as their income fluctuates throughout their life span. Keynes's view that only current income is the main factor influencing consumer behavior is, therefore, too narrow and does not correspond to the reality observed in the long term, so that his theory of consumption can only be used to explain short-term consumer behavior and has no general validity. The present dissertation looks at the consumer behavior of each individual, hence, the micro level. Keynes and Friedman were concerned with the overall view—the macro view—of economic thinking. Thus, if one follows the theses of the two, it can be seen that they form a cycle that is ultimately influenced by each individual. It is precisely for this reason that these two economists have been chosen to complete the historical development of thought with regard to the individual consumer. The consumer as the linchpin of his or her actions in the marketplace and the consequences for the market economy were considered by these economists, as were other attributes relevant to the marketplace. Therefore, they form a solid basis for understanding in terms of interpretations of the actions of market participants.

1.2. Selected theories of consumer behavior

For producing companies, consumer behavior and a person's decision regarding consumption have a direct influence on a business's profit and, therefore, require extended and in-depth research to create a successful brand (Balick et al., 2016; Kravets et al., 2018). Economists want to understand consumers' actions within their field of research and producers want to have competitive advantage through knowledge on sales-promoting attributes of future products that could turn out to be market leaders.

During the period between the 1850s and the 1920s, the focus of the players from the supply side of the market was on mass production and production capacity as well as standardized concepts used to generate sales (Kravets et al., 2018, p. 45). However, little creativity was needed to transform the cycle of a product's life. During the 1930s to the 1950s, a more individualized strategy was created. According to the social development of men and women and the role of families, advertising was aimed at serving all "roles." Due to this traditional mindset, the promotional activities reflected stereotypes as regards conventional households. From the 1950s onward, marketing actions and the focus of producers shifted to a more complex task. Switching from a sales to the marketing orientation required far more advanced tools to understand consumers and the products and services that would satisfy them.

Two definitions show that understanding consumers' needs is a core competitive advantage: "Consumer behavior is defined as activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services," and "Consumer behavior also can be defined as a field of study that focuses on consumer activities" (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 2006). Marketing concepts concentrate on "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives" (Engel et al., 2006). Moreover, customer centricity is "a strategic commitment to focus every resource of the firm on serving and delighting profitable customers" (Engel et al., 2006, p. 34). There are numerous theories and concepts of consumer behavior based on profound studies, such as Gordon Foxall, whose core work is behavioral psychology and behavioral economics, or Gerrit Antonides, whose research on European consumer behavior is essential (Dreijerink, Handgraaf, & Antonides, 2021; Foxall, 2020; Sheth & Koschmann, 2019). Noteworthy is Jagdish Sheth, together with John Howard. They elaborated thoughts on buying behavior (Bither, Howard, & Sheth, 1971). The works of Francesco Nicosia and George Katona were influential. They published papers on consumer economics in connection to psychological aspects in the 1970s (Katona, 1974; Nicosia, 1973).

However, from the perspective of this dissertation, only some of them were considered. The decisive factor for this selection was the article by Malter, Holbrook, Kahn, Parker, & Lehmann who summarized the history and development around the topic of consumer behavior research in their paper entitled, "The past, present, and future of consumer research" (Malter, Holbrook, Kahn, Parker, & Lehmann, 2020). The developments of the different theories and approaches presented here led to the views of the following researchers being considered in this thesis, as their theories best fit the topic of consumer behavior:

Summarizing theories of consumer behavior, literature repeats a few—but highly significant—findings in the works of Levitt, De Mooij, and Hofstede. The next review serves to classify this present work accordingly.

Theodore Levitt (1925–2006) made one of the first attempts to identify a definition for "globalization" as he observed interesting developments in the market. His view concentrated on a company's management and its workers and claimed that a company's marketing can influence consumer choice (Levitt, 1983). Offering standardized products connected to a powerful marketing strategy led many entrepreneurial activities to succeed. A memorable example refers to Henry Ford: When it came to the production of his Model T, after he had perfected the production lines to their optimum, people asked about the available colors. His reply was, "You can get it in any color as long as it is black" (Ford, 1922, p. 72). In relation to trends in consumer behavior, this quotation serves as a good example of how the industry influenced consumers' preferences.

Levitt was not able to forecast a development that would be subject to a satiated market. This challenge was accepted by de Mooij, who published her work in 1998 (de Mooij, 1998). Two decades later, keywords like "marketing" and "globalization" were in common use, and the challenge has moved in the direction of a consumer who no longer wishes to be characterized by her or his consumption behaviors (de Mooij, 1998). While Levitt suggested that a standardized marketing strategy can be successful in different markets (hence, in different countries serving different cultures), and that strategies can be applied at relatively low cost, de Mooij as well as Hofstede underlined that adjusting a product to market-specific preferences is necessary to reach the most-profitable sales outcome (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). They recognized the shift toward consumers' individual preferences. This is a costly undertaking and a difficult task, so in the past, many entrepreneurs simply tried to adopt as many standards as possible in their sales strategies.

Finally, it depends on the product how sales run, and the question of whether it is a highly emotional product, or a necessary product shall be answered. At this point, the shift to the confectionery market is necessary because a global interpretation of "consumers' preferences" depends on the product being analyzed.

1.3. Consumer trends and habits triggered by the industry changes

The food industry meets a constant challenge. This challenge is called dynamism, and it forces the entire industry to consistently and continuously track consumers' preferences. The food industry must not only adapt to local conditions, but in particular consider global and, above all, societal developments. Therefore, it is indispensable to observe trends and habits and react to them dynamically (R. John & Rückert-John, 2020; Kühnapfel, 2021).

Consumer habits and trends are mutually dependent, so the following list is intended to provide a rough overview of these in view of changes in the industry and consumer trends and habits. According to the page of "Cambridge Dictionary" trends are defined as "a general development in a situation or in the way that people behave (…)" ("Cambridge Dictionary," 2021)and habits are defined as "a particular act or way of acting that you tend to do regularly" ("Cambridge Dictionary," 2021). Table no. 1 presents consumer trends and habits triggered by the industry changes.

Table 1 Consumer trends and habits triggered by the industry changes

Changes in the industry	Consumer trends and habits
Diversity in product range	Following traditions
Sustainability as sales argument	Axiality of the environment and nature
Mass production & production lines	Serving lifestyles
Standardized vs. individualized marketing concepts	Individuality
Dynamism	Flexibility in purchasing (online vs. in store)
Internationalization of marketing activities (product innovations)	Increasing price sensitivity
Modern food technology & transparency	Interest in origins of raw materials

Source: Own elaboration

In connection with the internationalization of markets during the 1980s and '90s, consumers had opportunities to sample foreign food products more often than they were accustomed to simply because these had not been offered before (Fildes, Nikolopoulos, Crone, & Syntetos, 2008). This was because of the internationalization of manufacturing companies, which intensified their exports to keep up with increasing competition. In addition, during this period, modern food technology allowed the development of new products (Ross & Mintz, 1987). For the production of confectioneries, in particular, this meant a greater growth in production than, for example, staple foods. Consumers began to change their behaviors because products were now steadily available (Breitenacher, Täger, & Ifo-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (München), 1990, p. 42). This positive trend continued in the following years, and the consumption of confectionery products increased steadily.

Once a market was saturated, bringing about a further increase in consumption became difficult (Engel et al., 2006; Halkier & Holm, 2006). For the confectionery industry, this was a hurdle that could be overcome by introducing new technologies and manufacturing processes. Product innovations temporarily led to increased consumption until a new product variant was added. Therefore, changes in taste or package size followed, which also led to a purchase decision for the product and, thereby, generated sales (Breitenacher et al., 1990, p. 68).

Legal regulations, however, influence these trends and habits. There is an entire series of laws and regulations with which the industry must comply, and product innovations must also comply with these. The following regulations, among others, are anchored in legislation aimed at the food industry: food labeling, nutritional-value labeling, regulations for maximum pesticide levels, dietary regulations, and regulations involving meat and dairy products are a few (Breitenacher et al., 1990, p. 69; Halkier & Holm, 2006). For the investigation of the dynamics involved in eating habits related to confectionery products, however, the consumer is the focal point. Questions about the extent to which the consumer's preferences are taken into consideration by manufacturing companies and how the implementation can succeed need to be clarified.

In general, consumer behavior is purposeful and goal-oriented. It is more achievable for a company to change its marketing programs to fit the preferences of consumers than to expect consumers to change their preferences to fit the needs of a marketer (Engel et al., 2006, p. 26). A continuation through the years and a look at further developments leads to the conclusion that the consumer is increasingly becoming globally (Anna M. Nikodemska-Wołowik, Bednarz, & Foreman, 2019) oriented because he or she is able to do so due to the availability of digital devices. With the introduction of the internet and the spread of imports from foreign markets, the consumer's ability to access information has become more diverse. Not only that, but over time, distribution logistics have emerged to deliver the goods that consumers want right to their doorsteps (Breitenacher et al., 1990, p. 205). This development is highly pronounced in the case of confectionery products. The consumer is a global entity: even with differences between cultures and consumer decisions, as consumers become more global, the similarities become much greater. The challenge is to build a marketing strategy on the universals rather than on the differences (Balick et al., 2016). For example, some cosmetic brands attract women's attention in many countries even of diversified cultures (like L'Oréal with the leading promotional slogan "because you are worth it"). Another example is advertisements featuring mothers and their children; their needs are also similar worldwide, at least when it comes to their basic supplies.

For confectionery products, the development of eating habits in the evaluated markets was the focus. In January 2021, research by McKinsey and EuroCommerce examined expectations and assessments for the next two to three years in food retailing (Gerckens, Laizet, Läubli, & Zgraggen, 2021). The study revealed the expectation that greater importance will be attributed to online retailing, that preference will be given to products geared to a specific lifestyle, and that greater price sensitivity will prevail. Already, one can see that food is increasingly being purchased online. This has brought movement into the industry as manufacturers have felt compelled to respond to this development and to expand and increase their online offerings. To meet the next trend—the desire for greater diversity—it has also been necessary to broaden the range of products offered. Here, however, the insight relates to food retailing as a whole. For the confectionery industry itself, an interest in information on the origin of the raw materials has developed, presenting manufacturers with the challenge of accommodating an appropriate response in their manufacturing processes so that this factor can be used as a quality feature to influence consumers' decision-making processes. Another finding of the study emphasized the fact that today's lifestyles are changing consumer demand; 58% of Germans said they wanted to adapt their spending to their lifestyle. In Poland, 52% agreed with the statement, and in Russia, it was 34%. For producers in food retailing, this means that more promotions and special offers must be included in cost-planning to satisfy this desire. From the consumer's point of view, quality must not suffer. After all, quality continues to be the frontrunner when it comes to purchasing decisions in the grocery sector (Assadourian, 2010; Petrescu, Vermeir, & Petrescu-Mag, 2020). The fact is that smart assortment planning can help to meet these demands and generate profits at the same time. Additionally, such phenomena as inter alia: techceleration (rapid acceleration in the innovative technologies), global info accessible in the 24/7 mode, and social media networking enable consumers to be better informed and to disseminate their opinions immediately and internationally.

1.4. The problem of choice: a consumer perspective

If one considers the phenomenon of a consumer's decision-making, there is no getting around the explanations offered by psychologist Barry Schwartz. His remarks are based on the findings of scientists Sheena Iyengar and Mark Lepper from 2000 (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000), when three different studies examined this phenomenon. In one, the paradox of choice regarding varieties of jam was scientifically examined through a field experiment that looked at how consumers' purchase behaviors changed when more varieties were made available. Likewise, the research examined the differences in the results when students were given a wide selection of topics for a scientific report and, finally, the different results when they were offered a limited choice of boxed chocolates versus a broader choice. This study is well-known in behavioral research because the findings can be applied at different scales. For the study of the choice for or against confectionery items, these findings are also applicable, and consumers' views regarding the number of varieties on the market were also investigated through the questionnaire (see Appendix I).

The phenomenon in decision theory that fundamentally influences the sales and marketing strategy of a confectionery manufacturer is the fact that the consumer is more inclined not to make a purchase decision when there is a large variety of a product on offer than to possibly make a purchase decision that is wrong from his point of view. Consequently, a large supply does not generate increased consumption, but rather none at all. Even worse is the finding that the consumer is left frustrated after his unsuccessful decision-making (Kast, 2012; Sharma & Nair, 2017; Tang et al., 2017).

The results of the 2010 meta-analysis by Benjamin Scheibehenne, Rainer Greifeneder, and Peter M. Todd, as well as the findings of the 2009 study by Elena Reutskaja and Robin Hogarth, are also worth noting. This is because, based on the previous results, one would have to assume that having no choice at all would make consumers happiest, yet this is not the case. The meta-analysis showed that the happiness curve certainly rises after a successful selection, but there is a reversal point from which it becomes increasingly difficult to select. The happiness curve falls, and the purchase experience is associated with negative feelings, resulting in the consumer being less likely to consume in the future to avoid repeating this frustrating experience (Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009; Scheibehenne, Greifeneder, & Todd, 2010). In addition, the authors noted that consumers ultimately look for the best alternative and want to make the right decision in each case. However, given the glut of offerings and varieties in the confectionery industry, this is no more feasible than in other areas flooded with offerings. This decision-making process is tedious and exhausting, and the process is made more difficult when the differences between the numerous items offered are no longer recognizable (Schwartz, 2016).

Many researchers have addressed the problem of decision-making on the part of the consumer and have recognized that, at a certain point, having a large number of offerings to choose from unsettles the consumer in his or her purchasing process rather than helping. Thus, Peter Wright stated in 1975 that marketing strategies need to catch up in this respect and that it is essential to take the consumer’s perspective before launching another alternative onto the market (Wright, 1975). In addition, Ravi Dhar summarized in 1997 that it is no longer about the “how” in the decision-making but rather about the consequences of a large number of offers from the same industry (Dhar, 1997). However, authors outside manufacturing industries have noted similar behaviors when it comes to making a decision given a large choice of alternatives (Timmermans, 1993). In summary, the matter of choice was and is certainly driven by too large a supply of alternatives. Table 2 presents an overview of the theories on paradox of choice.

Table 2 Overview of the theories on paradox of choice

Researcher(s)	Title	Year of publication
Barry Schwartz	The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less. (Schwartz, 2016)	2016
Sheena Iyengar, Mark Lepper	When choice is demotivating: Can one desire too much of a good thing? (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000)	2000
Benjamin Scheibehenne, Rainer Greifeneder, Peter M. Todd	Can there ever be too many options? A meta-analytic review of choice overload. (Scheibehenne et al., 2010)	2010
Elena Reutskaja, Robin Hogarth	Satisfaction in choice as a function of the number of alternatives: When “goods satiate.”. (Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009)	2009
Danielle Timmermans	The impact of task complexity on information use in multi-attribute decision making. (Timmermans, 1993)	1993
Peter Wright	Consumer Choice Strategies: Simplifying Vs. Optimizing. (Wright, 1975)	1975
Ravi Dhar	Consumer preference for a no-choice option. (Dhar, 1997)	1997
Bas Kast	Ich weiß nicht, was ich wollen soll: Warum wir uns so schwer entscheiden können und wo das Glück zu finden ist. (Kast, 2012) *(engl. translation: “I don't know what to want: Why we find it so hard to decide and where to find happiness”.)*	2012
Arun Sharma, Shreekumar K. Nair	Switching behaviour as a function of number of options: How much is too much for consumer choice decisions? (Sharma & Nair, 2017)	2017
Yun-Chia Tang, Yi-Ching Hsieh, Hung-Chang Chiu	Purchase decision: does too much choice leave us unhappy? (Tang et al., 2017)	2017

Source: Own elaboration

Following these approaches, this research tried to transfer this phenomenon, the unhappiness of finding oneself in a situation where there are too many options, in the confectionery offer and to judge it accordingly. The participants were asked to share their views on too many varieties in taste but also too many packaging designs. It can be stated that the results of the survey are in line with the findings obtained from the literature. Accordingly, the theories could suggest reactions, no matter what the offer is. If people have too many alternatives, they tend to become frustrated and what follows is not a rational decision, but a decision made out of necessity. It can also increase the cognitive dissonance felt by buyers (S. Z. John & Nair, 2017; Mattia, Leo, & Principato, 2020). This situation of excessive demand can be derived from the various studies and can also be applied to confectionery in this case.

1.5. Consumer mega-segments

The major changes of the confectionery industry were discussed in Chapter 1.3. From the food industry's perspective, however, product attributes are assigned to consumer preferences. One example is the assumption that older people like to eat bitter (also called dark) chocolate, and younger people prefer so-called jellies. This view, recognized from the literature, was also addressed in the present work, and questions were developed for the questionnaire that could be filtered according to the age of the participant. The results of the present work in regard to this very topic are noted in Chapter 4.

The division of consumers into segments is intended to help the industry better understand the needs and thus increase their demand, while aligning sales activities according to preferences. Meanwhile there are more than five such categories one can read about in literature. These are presented in table no. 3.

Table 3 Consumer mega-segments

Name of mega-segment	Born in …	Age (in 2021)
GI Generation	1901 - 1924	≥ 97
Silent Generation	1925 – 1946	75 - 96
Baby Boom Generation	1947 - 1964	57 - 74
Generation X	1965 - 1979	42 - 56
Millennials (Generation Y)	1980 - 1999	22 - 41
Generation Z	2000 - 2009	12 -21
Generation α	2010 -	11 and less

Source: (Gardiner, Grace, & King, 2013; Howe & Strauss, 1991; Jerome, Scales, Whithem, & Stockton, 2014; Jorgensen, 2003)

Returning to the subdivision of the target groups by generation, the findings of Sezin Baysal Berkup were used since different and similar subdivisions can be found in the literature (Berkup, 2014).

To explain consumer behavior based on this background, one has to examine the environment and also divide the target group into subgroups where a historical change, and thus a dynamic development, can be made visible. Because of the high level of complexity in doing so, the literature delivers a more pragmatic approach. In this case, examinations address the question of how a product can be made more attractive to buyers. This paper follows the opposite observation: Which products do consumers demand, and why? Conducting the research, each target group was divided into subgroups by age according to Berkup.

Each generation has its own characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages (Anshari, Alas, Razzaq, Shahrill, & Lim, 2019). For confectionery-producing companies, it is crucial to define and understand consumers. Generational research has proven to be a valuable tool in economics because it allows a different perspective on certain behaviors. It does not stereotype and categorize consumers but rather seeks to understand why and how people behave in the marketplace in terms of their age. Many factors come into play here: global events, trends, and perspectives on certain issues. These factors are perceived differently by different age groups and, therefore, have different effects on consumer behavior (Solomon, Askegaard, Hogg, & Bomossy, 2019, p. 437). This is also the reason why this subdivision is used in this work. First, a look at the age groups used here is presented so that further evaluations can be based on these characteristics. Berkup's findings provide the following definitions, which have been summarized as this is adequate as a rough overview (Berkup, 2014):

- The baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, were the first post-World War II generation. They witnessed the economic miracle and represented the generation with the highest birth rate.
- Generation X ("Gen X"), born between 1965 and 1979, grew up in the time of economic crisis. In this period, married couples increasingly separated, which influenced the young people of that time.
- Generation Y, born between 1980 and 1993 and also known as "Gen Y" or "Millennials", have consciously experienced the turn of the millennium and are fully aware of the internet boom and globalization.
- Generation Z, born between 1994 and 2010 and also called Generation YouTube, has completely integrated the digitalization of everyday life.

From the above list, it can be deduced that the consumer has become increasingly demanding, and that market entry and success are related to this. Regarding purchasing criteria, this means that consumers want to be better informed before they decide to make a purchase. The possibilities for research have increased greatly with the expansion of the internet and social media, and these tools are used more intensively by today's consumers than in the past. Manufacturing companies are faced with the question of how they want to meet their consumers to convince them to choose their products. In this context, keywords such as price, quality, and origin, which dominate as influencing factors in consumer research (Solomon et al., 2019, p. 343), should be mentioned. Moreover, today's young consumers, representing Generation Z, gather extensive information about a brand or product before they buy it or even recommend it to others. On the supply side, this means that the entrepreneur selling a product must emphasize those attributes that will persuade the young consumer to buy it. These include factors like sustainability and transparency (e.g., in the manufacturing process), commonalities that go hand-in-hand with the consumer's lifestyle or the link to experiences with which the product is associated.

Generation Y, on the other hand, appears at first glance to be somewhat more open-minded when it comes to accessing product information. These consumers grew up in times when it has become important to be open to new things; examples include the acceptance of gay marriage, and freedom of religion and belief are taken for granted. In addition, these so-called digital natives embrace new communication technologies, so they are ultimately empowered to live out their individual creativity. Independence is one of the most important aspects of this generation (Huber & Rauch, 2013, p. 14ff.).

For the slightly older market participants of Generation X, the information situation does not need to be examined in the same depth as for the Generation Z consumers. Generation X was raised in uncertain times, as adolescents were just learning about social issues like racism, environmental awareness, and social injustice. In addition, the divorce rate rose sharply during their time, and new family constellations developed in which young people had to take on more responsibility and learned that success could be achieved through hard work.

Most of the baby boomers, by contrast, no longer bear the burden of generating a certain income to be able to consume. As a rule, their homes are paid off or their rental apartments are affordable or at least appropriate for their pension amounts. This target group wants to consume and enjoy life. They want to have experiences and are curious to know what life has to offer. From a company's perspective, this is an important target group that needs to be catered to because this older generation certainly does not want to be relegated to a corner. Depending on their interests, they prefer goods other than those sought by younger consumers. If a company wants to convince this group of its product, then it is the product's attributes (i.e., the possible advantages it offers) that play a role and not the age of the consumer that would influence the purchasing decision. Arguments aimed at age lead to the opposite effect, and the baby boomer would rather not consume. The reason is that this generation is well aware that they have reached a certain age, but this fact should not be mentioned if possible. This demographic is generally self-confident because they have survived many crises and worked to be valued as consumers (Solomon et al., 2019, p. 445).

CHAPTER 2
DYNAMICS OF SELECTED CONFECTIONERY MARKETS

2.1. Specificity of the confectionery market

The confectionery market itself is special in many aspects. People in general have a positive attitude, right from the start, when it comes to sweets. Furthermore, although competition within the industry is not as tough as in other industries (Hartmann et al., 2017), that does not make it less intense and challenging.

As the topic of this dissertation is the dynamics of countries such as Germany, Poland, and Russia, a comparative look at these markets is warranted and follows in the next subchapters. Russia has the highest sales volume level. This is justified by the size of the population and the related purchasing power. Germany takes second place when it comes to a comparison of those three markets. And finally, Poland follows as third on the sales volume level of the three (*Statista Consumer Market Outlook*, 2020). Nevertheless, a steady upward trend can be observed for the markets in Germany and Poland, and Russia remains at a high level.

Sales per capita show a dynamic within the individual markets. In Germany, sales per capita were below those of Russia, Poland, and Eastern Europe as a whole by 2020. In 2021, the level moved to about the level of Eastern Europe and slightly exceeded that of Russia. Poland's confectionery and snacks market has outperformed the other markets on average since 2017 and is predicted to have a high rate of increase until 2026 (*Statista Consumer Market Outlook*, 2020).

The strength of the confectionery market, including snacks, has shown not only how much potential there is in this segment through net sales, but also what dynamics prevail there ("Handelsdaten.de," n.d.). When it comes to the price level of confectionery and snacks, it is the lowest in Poland. The year 2020 saw strong sales for Russia, and a look at the price per unit reveals that, for that year, there was a reduction compared to the price in 2019. In 2021, the price per unit remained at a similar level, and increases per unit are forecast only for 2022. Poland, however, is pursuing a different strategy. There, the price per unit has been at almost the same level since 2013; only very small price increases were seen. This in turn underlines the forecast that there could be increased sales volumes in the future. Germany shows an increase in prices at an already high level for the period 2013–2026 ("https://de.statista.com/outlook/cmo/lebensmittel/suesswaren-snacks/europa," n.d.). From 2020 to 2021, there was a significant price increase, although this trend is not expected to continue in the long term ("Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie e.V.," n.d.). Unit prices in Germany are at a high level compared with the other countries studied here.

In summary, it can be said that consumption has increased overall in recent years. Within individual product groups, preference shifts can be observed over time, but overall, the trend remains upward.

It is fortunate for the manufacturers of confectionery products that no exponential growth can be observed because the increase, or expansion, of production capacity cannot be easily managed. First, production capacity depends on the available machinery needed to produce the items. Each machine, in turn, must be located in a suitable building, and to complete the dependencies, each building must be built on an appropriate plot of land. If one assumes an average construction period of about two years for a building and adds another year for the planning, construction, and upgrading of production machinery, we can ultimately talk about a lead time of about three years before a capacity expansion can be integrated into the operational business (Drechsel, 1996). Therefore, in terms of time, manufacturers shall know well in advance what trend is to be expected so that the appropriate machine can be built to meet demand. With existing equipment, a short-term increase in demand can be bridged because the machines can be operated up to a maximum. This means running as many shifts as possible on as many days as possible, and this, in turn, requires the manufacturer to have a correspondingly large number of employees available to handle this production load.

2.2. Dynamics of the German confectionery market

On average, a wide variety of confectionery products worth around nine billion euros are produced annually in Germany. This branch of the food industry accounts for about 7% of sales. Chocolate products represent a relevant branch of production in the confectionery industry, as they are all often in demand by consumers. Among the studied markets of Germany, Poland, and Russia, it is the third, Russia, that represents the highest per capita consumption of confectionery. Here, consumers ate about 9.2 kg per person in 2019 ("https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/20040/umfrage/jaehrlicher-schokoladenkonsum-pro-kopf-in-ausgewaehlten-laendern/," n.d.), whereas in 2017 it was just over 11 kg. Consumption in Germany has declined slightly from 2019 to 2020.

To gain an initial overview of the confectionery market in Germany, general information and data are processed first. According to the German online portal for statistics (Statista

GmbH), per capita sales of confectionery products in Germany increased by slightly more than 9% from 2012–2019, and in 2019, the per capita consumption of chocolate products was 9.2 kg. As part of the Market Outlook, published in August 2020, further growth into 2025 is expected, and this increased demand will bring the overall growth rate of per capita sales from 2012–2025 to over 23%. Figure no. 3 shows the development of per capita sales of confectionery products in Germany 2012 – 2025 in euro.

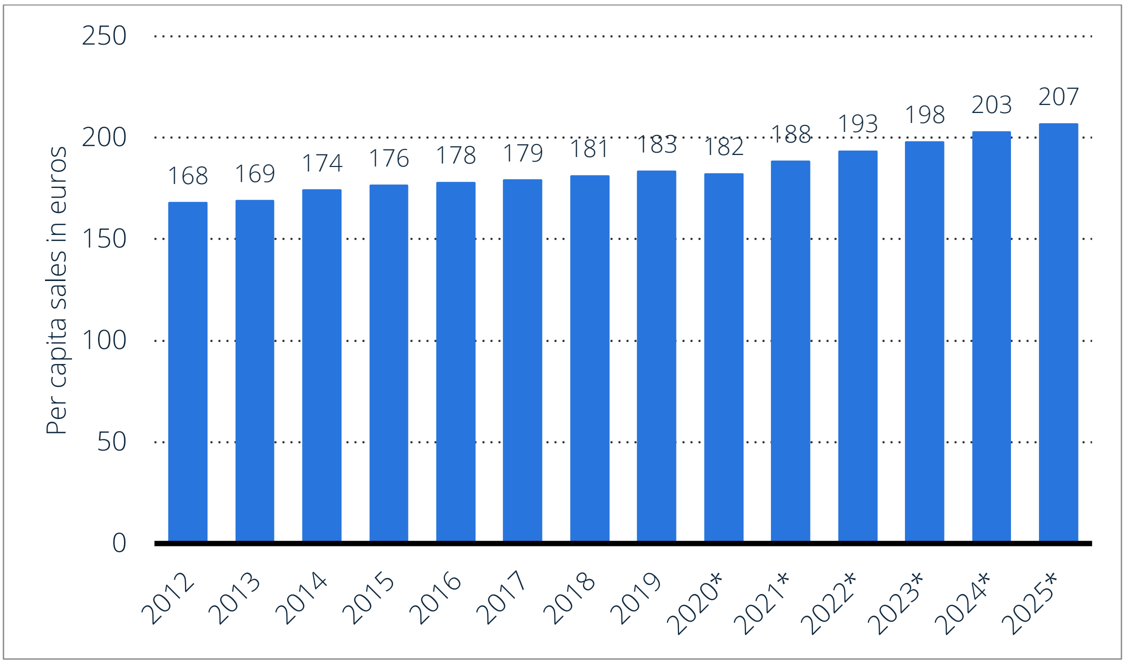


Figure 3. Per capita sales of confectionery products in Germany 2012–2025* (EUR). * Forecast

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Germany (n.d.). Retrieved on 9 October 2021 from https://de.statista.com/outlook/cmo/lebensmittel/suesswaren-snacks/deutschland.

While the consumption of sweets and snacks among men in 2018 compared to 2017 increased by 5%, a slight decrease of 1% was recorded in 2019/2020. The outlook for 2021 was predicted to increase to 32%. Regarding women's consumption, figures by the Federal Statistical Office showed a different picture. Among women aged 14 and older, consumption of sweets and snacks increased in 2018 compared to 2017 by 3%. In 2019/2020, a further increase of 4% was recorded, while the outlook for 2021 showed a 3% decline. However, the market for so called sugar confectionery (i.e., candies, lollipops) in Germany has not further expanded its volume. Sales barely increased in the years 2013 through 2019, remaining at a level between 2,500 and 2,800 million euros, which is expressed on figure no. 4.

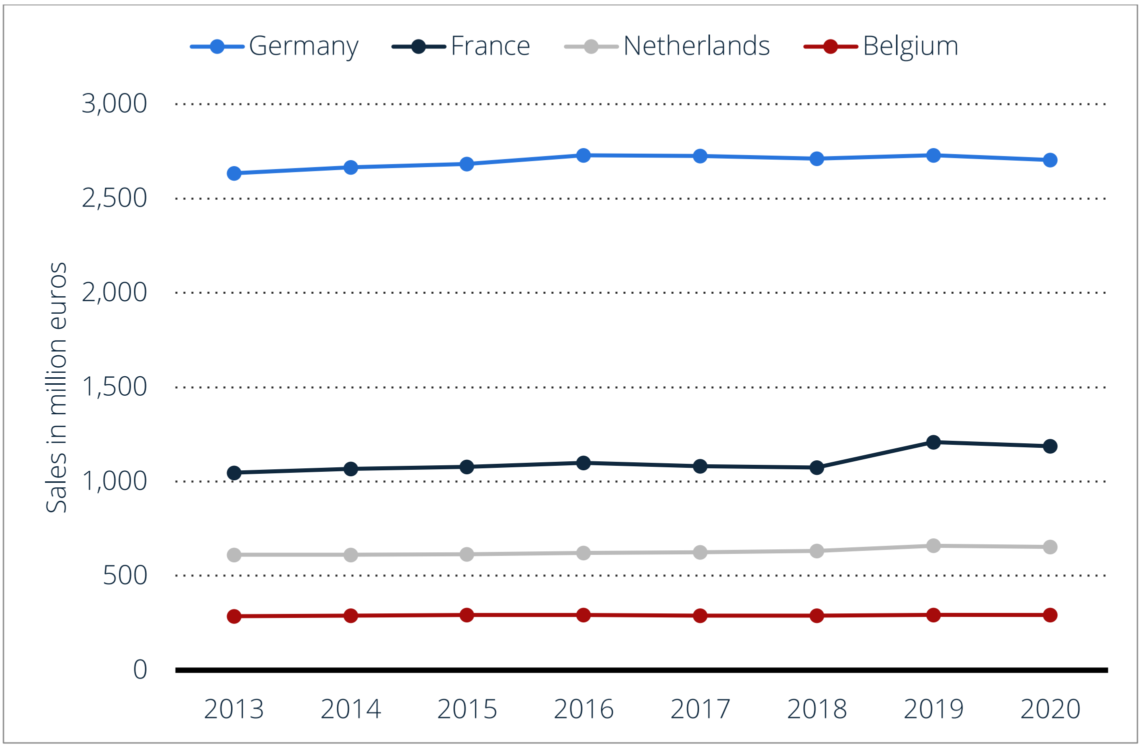


Figure 4. Market volume of sugar confectionery in selected countries in Western Europe 2013–2020 (per million euros)

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Germany (n.d.). Retrieved on 9 October 2021 from https://de.statista.com/outlook/cmo/lebensmittel/suesswaren-snacks/deutschland.

Additionally, in Germany, using an up and down ride within the confectionery industry was recorded. In 2013–2015, total sales within this sector were constant at about 1,400 tons. From 2016 on, an upturn was evident with sales increasing by about 43%. However, this trend was short-lived; by 2020, sales were already just over 1,500 tons to 25% below the success of 2016–2019 and only 7% above sales from 2013–2015 (see figure no. 5).

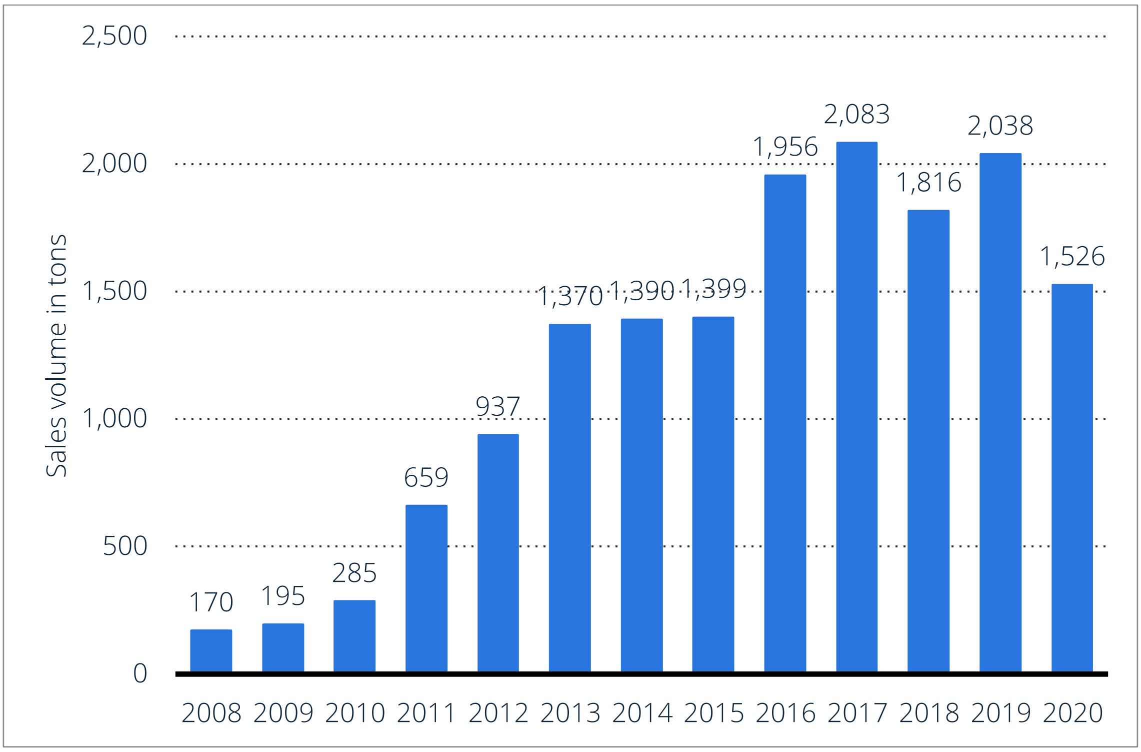


Figure 5. Sales Volume of Confectionery and Snacks in Germany

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Germany (n.d.). Retrieved 9 October 2021 from https://de.statista.com/outlook/cmo/lebensmittel/suesswaren-snacks/deutschland.

To complete the picture, the development of the number of companies that have their core competence in the production of confectionery products must be considered. For Germany, the growth rate here is rather moderate, amounting to 7% from 2008–2020. Figure no. 6 presents the development of numbers of confectionery production plants in Germany.

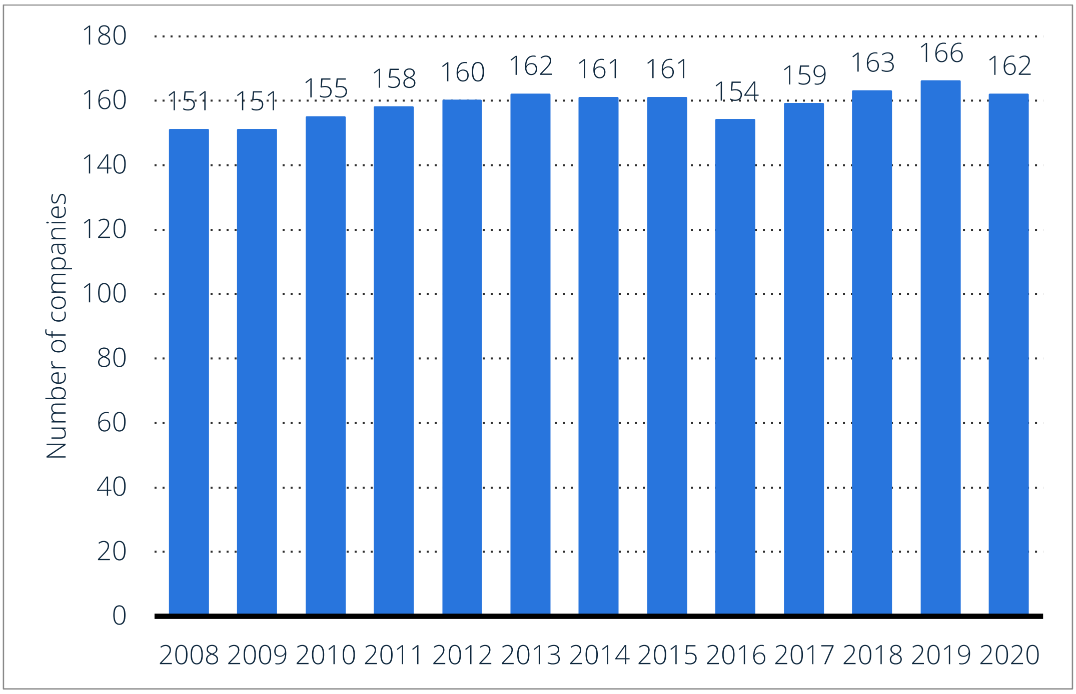


Figure 6. Number of confectionery production plants (excluding durable baked products and ice cream) in Germany, 2008–2020

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Germany (n.d.). Retrieved 9 October 2021 from https://de.statista.com/outlook/cmo/lebensmittel/suesswaren-snacks/deutschland.

The data presented on the figure 6 provide an indication of the developments that have taken place in the German confectionery market. Fundamentally and indispensably, however, it must be noted that there is no overall study regarding the German consumers of confectionery per se. The confectionery market provides constant data, and this is readily used by the industry to identify future trends; however, it does not seem to provide the desired success, at least not in the long term. This became clear from the sales volume, which has remained at a similar level since 2013. One reason could be the fact that there is hardly any research on confectionery preferences of consumers. Either the term "confectionery market" is defined differently, or the reports simply target phenomena that have been observed but do not indicate what consumers actually want. Statistics on sales figures show what has been purchased, but this does not mean that these products are also desired. The question of whether the consumer will, ultimately, reach for the next-best alternative has not yet been answered. This only shows that confectionery items are being consumed. The present study shall contribute to the knowledge that it is beneficial, from scientific and managerial purposes, to know the consumer's wishes.

2.3. Dynamics of the Polish confectionery market

For a comparison of countries in terms of consumer behavior, comparing their statistical data would be optimal. During the research, however, it turned out that an obstacle had to be overcome. For statistical data on confectioneries, different scales were used in reports; confectionery was defined differently; and different annual reports led to the fact that no one-to-one comparisons were possible, to name just a few of the challenges involved. Therefore, for the research, data that can at least convey the trend of the dynamics were summarized.

Regarding chocolate production in Poland, statistics do not reveal much. An interesting fact is that the number of companies producing cocoa, chocolate, and sugar confectionery products has increased since 2008. Within a decade, 65 new manufacturing companies were added (see figure no. 7).

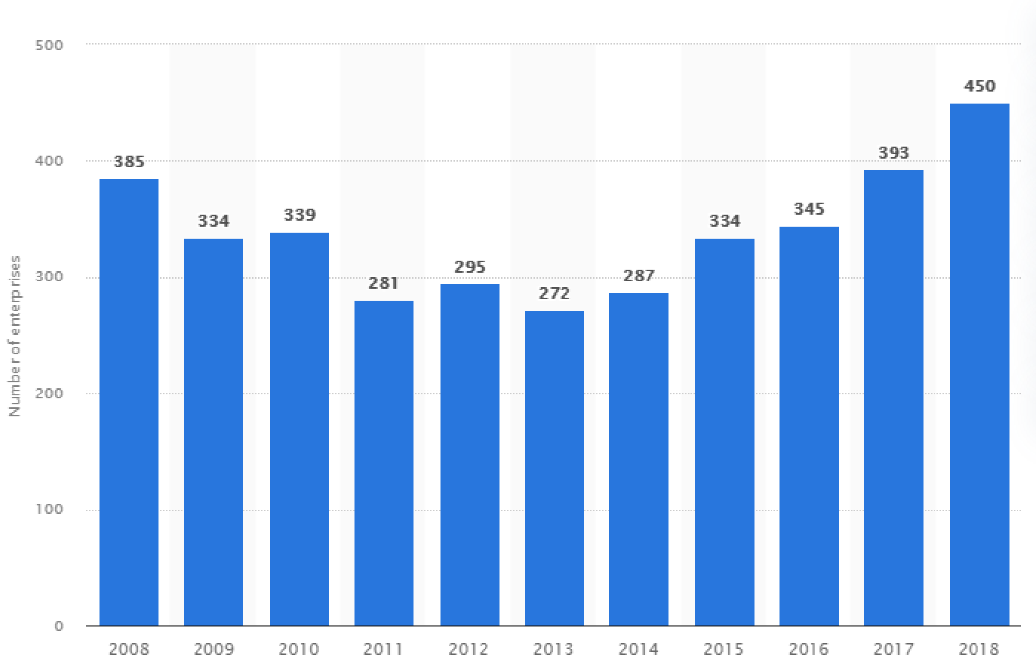


Figure 7. Number of enterprises manufacturing cocoa, chocolate, and sugar confectionery products in Poland, 2008 to 2018

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland. ID 1098767. Retrieved 14 October 2021.

Figure no. 8 illustrates the monthly consumption of chocolate in the years 2012–2019. To get an impression of how chocolate consumption has changed in Poland, it is useful to compare the years in which consumption has also grown. From 2015 to 2016, there was a greater increase in consumption than in the years before, as well as after. One could speak of irregular chocolate consumption, but this shows only part of the picture in the confectionery sector as a whole.

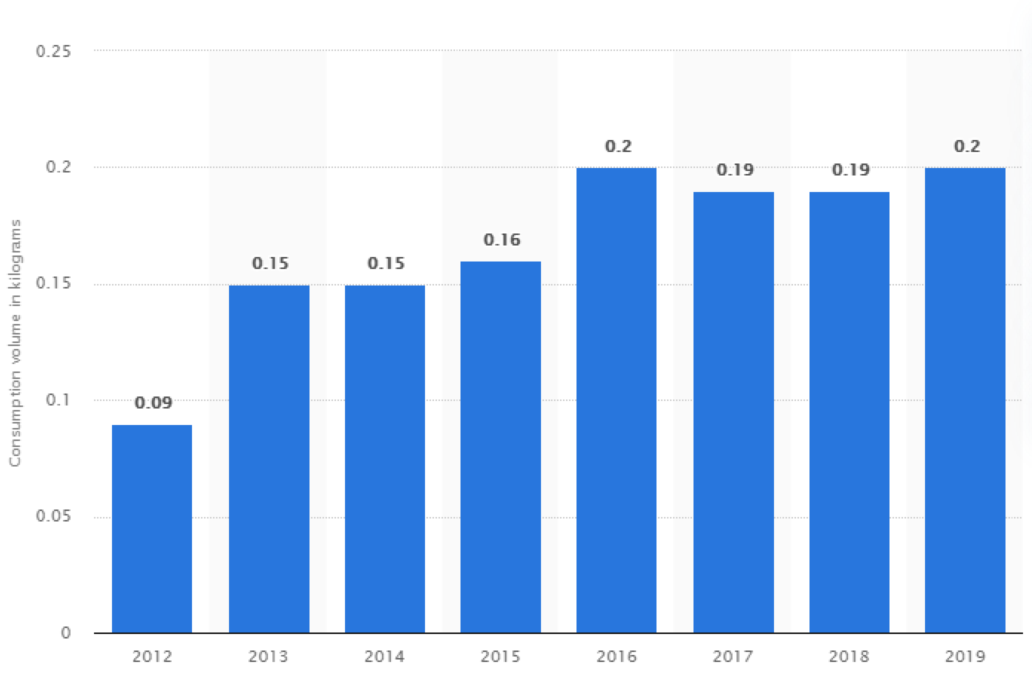


Figure 8. Monthly consumption of chocolate per capita in Poland, 2012–2019 (per kg)

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland. ID 1098767. Retrieved 14 October 2021.

Figure no. 9 visualizes that the percentage change since 2014 initially shows an upward trend, with notable highlights in this development. For confectionery, a slight increase was seen from 2014–2016, but this was followed by a reduction up to and including 2018, with the level falling back to that of 2014. By 2020, there was, again, a steep upward trend of 12.9% followed by a renewed decline. Nevertheless, a positive trend in confectionery and snack products is forecasted for Poland.

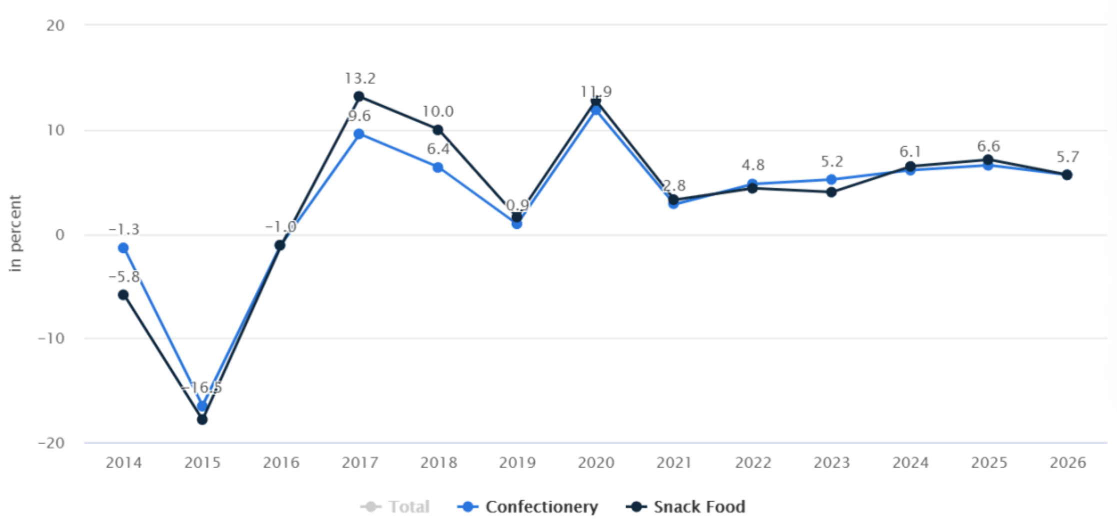


Figure 9. Confectionery and Snacks: Revenue change by segment (percentage)

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Poland (n.d.). Retrieved 14 October 2021 from https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/food/confectionery-snacks/poland#revenue

Figure no. 9 presents revenue changes on the Polish confectionery market and figure no. 10 presents volume growth development. However, to get an idea of how the volume growth in the confectionery and snack segment is faring, rather moderate growth can be seen in the years 2014–2019. From 2020 on, however, the share increased by 12.9%, a trend that, unfortunately, failed to continue. In 2021, a decline of 1.7% was recorded, but this is expected to stabilize in the coming years.

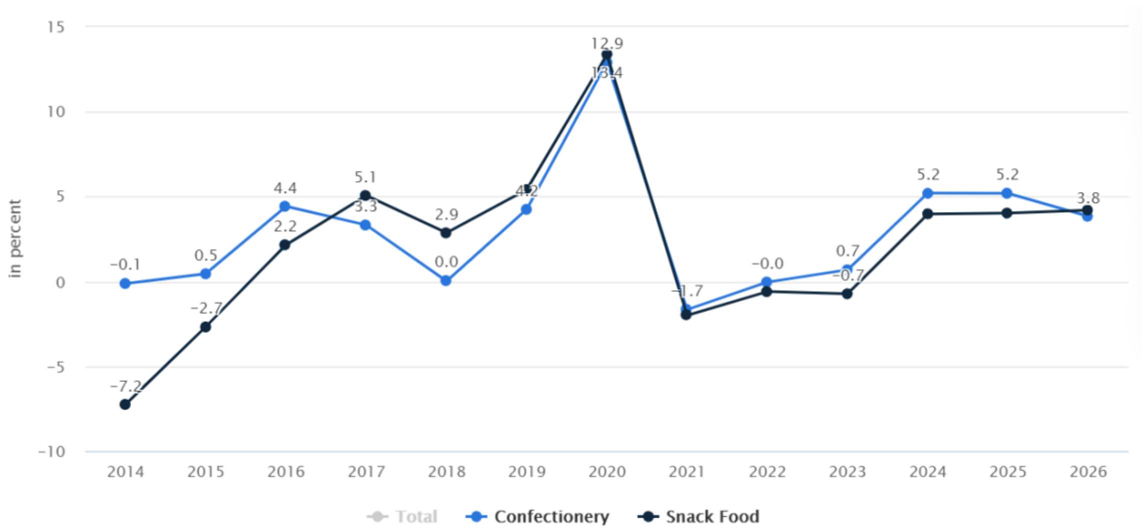


Figure 10. Confectionery and Snacks: Volume growth by segment (percentage)

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Poland (n.d.). Retrieved 14 October 2021 from https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/food/confectionery-snacks/poland#revenue

Figure no. 11 presents graphical data for the development of the average volume per capita, and although the figure also includes snacks, the results from the confectionery sector are examined further on. In the years 2013 through 2019, average per capita growth was rather moderate. In six years, the volume increased by 14%. After that, in just one year, there was another increase of 13%, with a slight decline of 1.5% forecast for 2021. If one believes the statistical data, there should be a growth of 17% by 2026 compared to 2021.

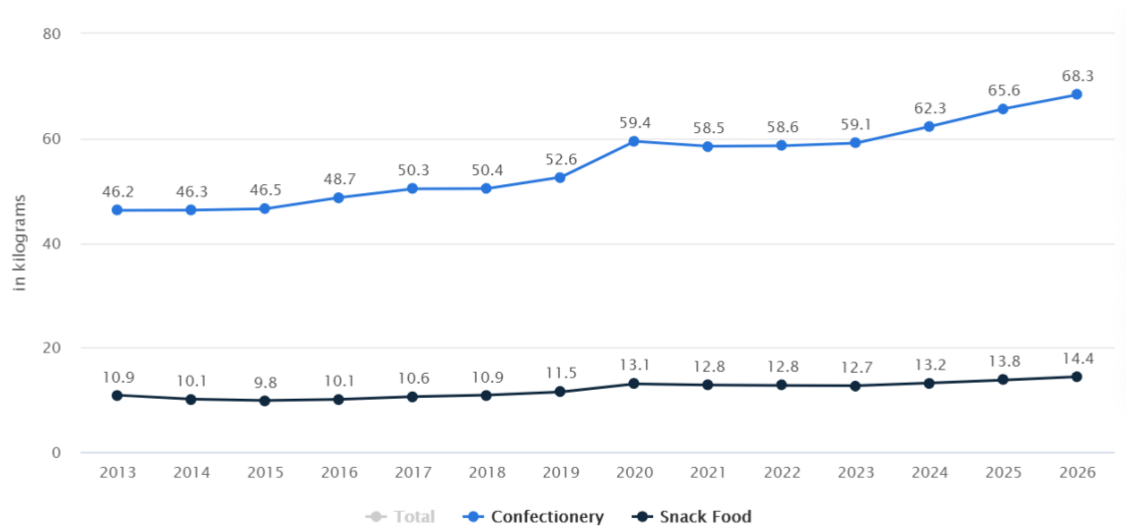


Figure 11. Confectionery and Snacks: Average volume per capita (kilograms)

Source: Confectionery and Snacks – Poland (n.d.). Retrieved 14 October 2021 from https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/food/confectionery-snacks/poland#revenue.

The Polish confectionery market is basically developing in a positive direction. Growth is rather moderate, but it is developing well despite the external circumstances of everyday life. The Polish consumer is traditional and is a family man (Pietkiewicz, 2012; Wadołowska, Babicz-Zielińska, & Czarnocińska, 2008). This is certainly also true for many German confectionery consumers as well as Russian. However, being traditional and family minded seems to have a little more weight in the purchase decision in Poland, than in other countries (Skorek, 2016). In addition, the Polish consumer is not used to openly communicate what he wants (Witek, 2019). People are accustomed to expressing their opinions when asked, rather than simply disclosing them directly. Consumption takes place when the Polish consumer knows the purpose of the product and when no surprise is expected (Dąbrowska & Janoś-Kresło, 2017). This attitude fits the confectionery market very well because, although there are plenty of product innovations, the traditional business accounts for the majority of sales.

2.4. Dynamics of the Russian confectionery market

A look at Russian chocolate consumption immediately shows that there can hardly be a larger and more appealing market for confectionery products (Muratova, Kushnir, Grishenko, Shumilina, & Galaktionova, 2021). Russia reached a record confectionery consumption of 24.5kg per capita in 2017 (*Die Russen waren süchtig nach Süßigkeiten*, n.d.). Regarding consumer spending, Russian consumers pay attention to special offers and discounts (Golden et al., 1995). Overall, consumer spending is rising, but credit volumes are rising as well, since consumers are making more of their purchases on credit (Novokmet, Piketty, & Zucman, 2018). Strong growth rates were recorded in online retail, although this is not limited to national offerings. Russian consumers appear to spend most of their disposable income on food and non-alcoholic beverages (Kravets et al., 2018).

The average price per unit and the sales volume in the confectionery and snacks segment have been discussed in the above subchapters. Therefore, the following is a summary of the data on the Russian market. Starting with figure no. 12, which shows the changes in revenue. It can be seen that changes in consumption on the Russian market are much more pronounced than in other markets. There is enormous purchasing power in Russia due to the size of the market. Thus, when trends emerge, the majority followed them, triggering a statistically and directly visible development. This was also the case for the confectionery and snack sector in 2016–2017 when revenue was generated that increased by 19.3%, losing 4.5% the following year. Thereby, from 2019 to 2020, a revenue increase of 8.4% was recorded. This level was not maintained for another year as revenues fell by 8% from 2020 to 2021. In general, an upward trend in the confectionery and snacks sector is forecast for Russia.

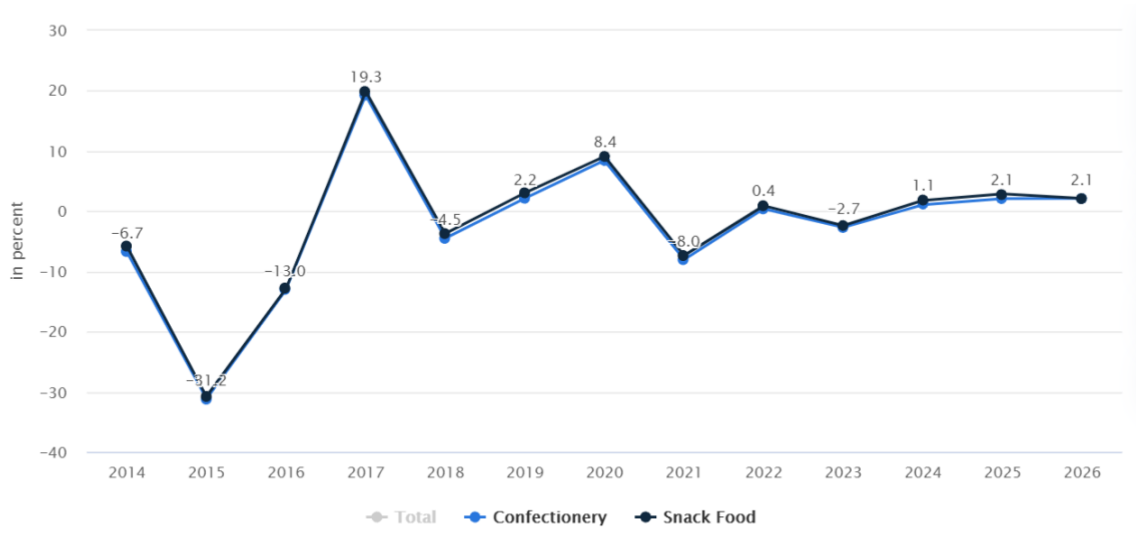


Figure 12. Confectionery and Snacks: Revenue change by segment (percentage)

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Russia (n.d.). Retrieved 14 October 2021 from https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/food/confectionery-snacks/russia#volume.

Figure no. 13 presents the volume growth of recent years. A downward trend in consumption from 2014 to 2016 is observable, but from 2017 onwards, there was a significant increase. Worth mentioning is the positive development from 2019 to 2020, with a growth of 13.9%, while the following year saw a 12.2% drop. Thus, the level from 2016 was almost reached. For the near future, growth is again forecasted.

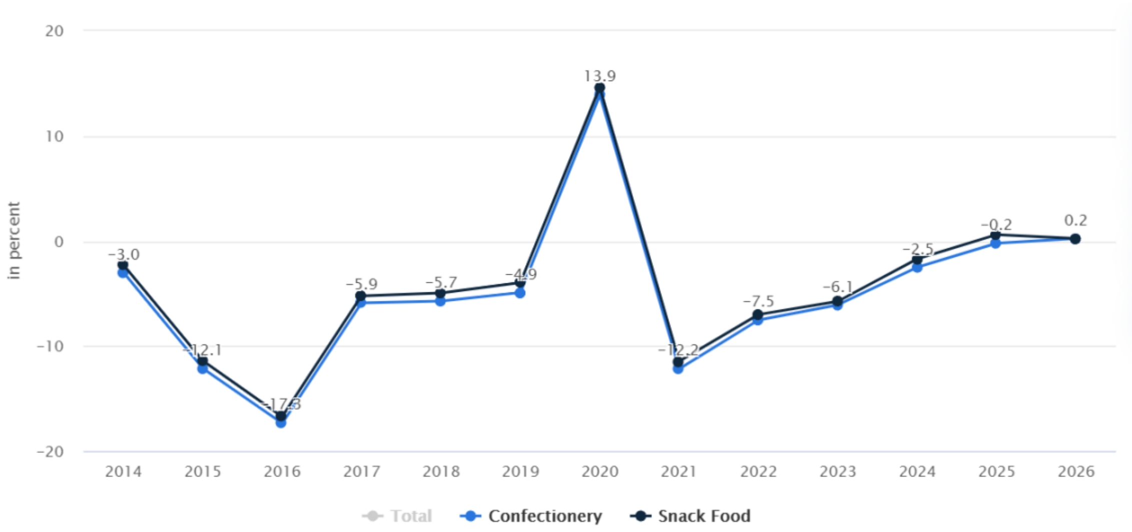


Figure 13. Confectionery and snacks: Volume growth by segment (percentage)

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Russia (n.d.). Retrieved 14 October 2021 from https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/food/confectionery-snacks/russia#volume

To complete the picture and make the data fairly comparable, it should be noted that the average per capita volume in the confectionery and snack food sector is declining for Russia (Honkanen, 2010). In 2013, the average per capita volume was 54.9 kg (see figure no. 14). In the following years until 2019, this value decreased by 41% to 32.3 kg. Then, in 2020, the following year, there was a positive upward trend of 14% that, however, could not be maintained, so that the average per capita volume fell back to the 2019 level in 2021.

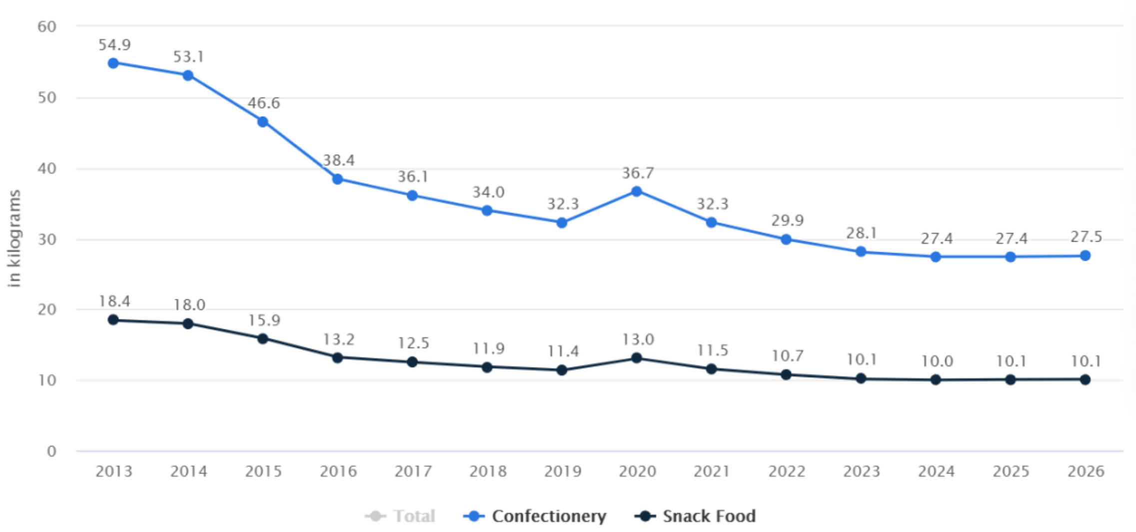


Figure 14. Confectionery and snacks: Average volume per capita (kilograms)

Source: Confectionery & Snacks – Russia (n.d.). Retrieved 14 October 2021 from https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/food/confectionery-snacks/russia#volume.

In conclusion, it can be noted that Russia's market size gives it purchasing power that is capable of influencing both trends, positive and negative (Cockerham, 2000; Slobodskaya, Safronova, & Windle, 2005). However, external circumstances still seem uncertain, so consumption is not rising in a linear fashion (Cooke, 2000; Masterovoy & Whittaker, 2013; Valsiner & Joravsky, 1991). The Russian consumer wants to be an active part of the market and is interested in the products that are offered and in looking at neighboring countries, to see what developments there are in order to be up-to-date on current issues (Dore, Adair, & Popkin, 2003; Oganov et al., 2011). Taken together, these factors are good prerequisites for attracting investors and bringing about positive economic developments in this country.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY APPLIED IN THIS STUDY

3.1. Background, methods, and procedures

First, the theoretical approach of business research with regard to decision theories has already been briefly presented in the literature review. Based on this, the connection between the process of decision making and the research approach was examined. In due course, the gained knowledge served as a basis for further analyses of this thesis. Within economic theories, various research approaches exist that support decision analysis, situation theory, or systems theory. For the conceptual basis of this study, the decision analytic approach was chosen. The aim was to derive the statements that make consumers' decision behavior understandable after analyzing real conditions and to make certain actions predictable. Referring to the decision theory it was possible to identify, formulate, structure and analyze problems that lead to certain actions in the market. A typical feature of decision theory is a distinct component within the behavioral sciences (Schneider, 2014, p. 12). Behavioral economics implement ideas from classical economics on the one hand and behavioral economics on the other, while looking for commonalities of rooted origins of an action. Here, the findings from behavioral economics allow a profound view of the consumer, whereby sociological and psychological aspects are included in the economic actions of each individual and thus an adequate statement about consumer behavior can be made.

When recommendations for action are presented in models, the original motivation for decisions must be examined. Here, basic models provide support, e.g., organizations, society, culture (Schanz, 2018). Scientific research on consumer behavior attempts to obtain general statements on decision-making, as these consumption patterns provide information on whether certain marketing strategies and concepts can be implemented in a differentiated or standardized manner, in different cultural circles. Particularly in times of globalization, these questions are gaining importance, as increasing standardization and worldwide implementation of marketing strategies could lead to an increasing homogenization of consumer structures and preferences (Bauer & Reisch, 2019; Baumol & Becker, 1978; OECD, 2017; Samson & Loewenstein, 2014). The three markets examined are geographically adjacent to each other. Although Germany and Poland are united by the commonality of belonging to the EU states, it seemed reasonable to assume that the geographical proximity to Russia could contribute to the fact that the consumers of these three markets influence each other, and therefore synergy effects could be used to produce confectionery that offers common preferences. The approach in this research is line with prior studies (Çağlayan & Astar, 2013; Hartmann et al., 2017; Maciejewski et al., 2019).

For the secondary research, numerous data from the existing international databases were used for market research. In particular, data from the national statistical services were examined in order to make statements on past consumer behavior with regard to confectionery comparable. The hurdles that had to be overcome were, for example, the different data bases. Nevertheless, data on the number of confectionery manufacturers, on the respective quantities of confectionery consumed, and also data on the historical development of confectionery consumption could be used as support. In order to obtain an intersection of comparable data, the statistical results were superimposed and analyzed with further market research analyses from the literature. This required extensive literature and internet research. In each case, the markets were examined individually for their basic understanding of the handling of confectionery in general. The German, Polish and Russian consumers' behavior on these three markets was in focus. It enabled to predict their future purchasing decisions. To this end, consumers were surveyed on their confectionery consumption behavior between November 14, 2020 and February 27, 2021. A particular challenge of the study was to survey three different markets. This study tended to obtain an adequate number of participants to establish verification of the hypotheses and on the other hand to achieve a homogeneous response rate. Specifically, private individuals from Germany, Poland, and Russia aged between 18 and 90 were surveyed. These age-related restrictions can be justified, since a participant must be capable of judging consumption in his or her household, i.e., be an active part of it. As for the older participants, they had to have at least access to the internet in order to participate in the survey at all. In addition, the answers to the individual topics were divided into clusters of generations.

A survey consisting of a non-probability convenience / purposive sampling method was conducted. Here, the snowballing technique was used in order to gain responses (Andrade, 2021; Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Etikan, 2016). Following this approach, social media channels (e.g., WhatsApp) were used to draw attention to the survey. Potential participants were also approached personally and directly, by the researcher's environment and by the researcher herself. The reason for this was that older people in particular had to be informed about what the survey was about and why participation was in no way risky, since it was exclusively about findings that serve scientific purposes. This reached a group of participants who consciously and concretely deal with consumer research questions and respond as a consumer from the market in which he or she lives.

The survey was conducted online on the web application platform named “SoSciSurvey”. This access route equally represented a restriction to the participation, because only people with internet access could participate in this form of the survey. In addition, the online survey also offers the possibility of visually underpinning questions or explaining them in more detail. In the end, however, it is the possibility of being able to better evaluate the data that is decisive in the question of why the online survey in particular is used (Hofte-Fankhauser & Wälty, 2011; Steiner & Benesch, 2021). In the present work, participants from all three countries were interviewed separately. For this purpose, a version of the questionnaire was made in each country's language and an English version was made to appear as an appendix in this paper.

3.2. The questionnaire

For the structure of the questionnaire, the research questions and the established hypotheses were first outlined in relation to each other, so that different areas emerged that were queried. Thus, analogous to the first research question, the questionnaire began with the collection of information on the factors influencing purchase motivation, followed by questions that addressed the area of the second research question, and so on. With this approach, areas / sections emerged, which in turn contained different types of questions, depending on the goal of the question. The following sections represented the structure: introduction, questions on household size, questions on confectionery consumption, questions on preferences in confectionery varieties, questions on the quality, range and design of confectionery and confectionery packaging, questions on advertising measures in the confectionery industry, questions on any stays abroad and, finally, questions on personal circumstances.

The questionnaire contained closed questions where answer options were given (Peytchev & Peytcheva, 2017). A neutral answer was always possible to each closed question that asked for a tendency. The reason for this is that the participants should not be forced to give an answer. This also avoids a summoned accumulation of "inappropriate" answers (Boparai, Singh, & Kathuria, 2018). Statistically, neutral answers also represent a statement that must be included in the evaluation - if it occurs (Crosilla & Malgarini, 2021). In summary, the data were interrogated using the following scales: Dichotomous scales (yes/no answers), querying frequencies using alternative questions, with multiple answer alternatives (daily, several times a week, rarely, never), and by using Likert scales with statements about the degree of agreement. For this, respondents had to be able to understand the question in order to give an appropriate answer. Therefore, in order to not represent a barrier in understanding the content, the questionnaire was prepared in the respective national language. Another, English version, was also prepared and served as a working paper in the preparation, as a basis for discussion and finally also because this version should be understandable for the reader of this thesis and can therefore be found in the appendix of this work.

At the beginning of the survey, the participants were informed about the content and purpose of the survey, and a note on data protection was provided in order to meet the legal requirements of such a consumer survey, and, furthermore, that the survey was anonymous (Albaum, Bradburn, & Sudman, 1979; Ballinger & Davey, 1998; Hite, Warwick, & Lininger, 1976).

In the due course, the purpose of the survey was briefly explained, together with a request for honest answers to the questions, and the indication that all answers were voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

Moving on to the next page, the first part of the questionnaire began and data on the respondent's own household was collected: “How many people live in your household?”, “how many of them are children?”, etc. Questions about household size were necessary to better interpret and analyze the responses. In particular, questions about the quantities consumed can be classified accordingly in connection with household size and are comprehensible in this context. This general information was followed by questions about the act of purchasing itself: “Who mainly does the grocery shopping?”, “in what situations or at what events do you buy sweets?”, etc. The amount of confectionery consumed is also important and followed the questions on purchasing: “How many sweets do you consume per week?”, i.e., more detailed questions regarding the buying decision for a good and against another were posted: “What features of a product have an impact on your buying decision?”. Questions about confectionery consumption were of considerable interest. Through this, an attempt was made to identify a dynamic that would also allow statements to be made about future purchasing behavior with regard to confectionery. It concerned not only the quantities consumed, but also the types of confectionery consumed, because one of the aims of the present work was to identify commonalities within the interviewees, and beyond national borders.

The topic of “buying decision” has been divided into sub-groups asking about the packaging, price, taste, etc. Since changes in eating habits were about to be detected, questions regarding time lapse were posted: “Have children changed your buying behavior of sweets?”, “has the quality of sweets change?”. Finally, when it comes to current market observations stated in the literature review, diversity of goods was stressed. Another main topic therefore is, the consumers perception of this, which was intercepted by questions organized through Likert-scales. In particular questions regarding quality, market supply, and the design were implemented. Concluding questions about interaction between producer and consumer were posted.

Finally, the questionnaire was rounded off with questions on the advertising measures of the manufacturers and on any stays abroad by the respondents. This was done in an attempt to work out the extent to which consumers allow themselves to be influenced in their purchasing decisions. Advertising measures and other external cultural influences can affect attitudes toward certain foods. From the survey, however, these influences could not be readily correlated. In order to achieve the goal of this paper, and because promotional measures and cultural influences must be considered holistically as direct factors influencing the purchase decision, the results coming from this section were not further investigated.

Questions regarding personal data were put at the end of the questionnaire: Gender, year of birth, economic condition, etc. In total the questionnaire consisted of 24 questions, divided onto 9 pages and could be answered within 5-7 minutes. At the end, the respondent was thanked for participating.

3.3. Conducting pilot study

Once the questionnaire construct was in a stable state, the next step was to determine whether it can be implemented, for technical reasons, and whether it can be understood by the respondents. For this purpose, a small pilot test was carried out first. In this case, the questionnaire was given to 15 people, with the request for hints and comments on any ambiguities and uncertainties that arose during the processing. The responses were divided into two areas: Technical implementation and personal understanding of the questions. The small pretest is an extremely important tool in the creation of the questionnaire, because the technical implementation in particular shall run smoothly if one decides to conduct an online survey. In addition, wording that may not be clearly understandable is discussed at this point, thus eliminating further uncertainties. Since the survey was conducted in three different countries, the small pretest was also conducted in all three markets. Five people from each country were given the pretest.

After the pretest had been completed and the questionnaire had been optimized as a result, a further pretest was carried out. For this, 35 people were again confronted with the survey. The distribution by country was about one third each, whereby 15 persons tested the German questionnaire and 10 persons each tested the Polish and the Russian version. Once again, minor changes were made to the wording of the questions. It was pleasing that there were no technical complaints and the questionnaire could not only be called up in all language versions, but also via different devices (via mobile phone, laptop, pc, etc.).

Likewise, the division of the sections was confirmed by the participants of the pretests. The design was comprehensible and structured. The participants were able to answer the questionnaire within a few minutes.

The second pretest, for which a somewhat larger test group was approached, had additionally another background. On the basis of the data obtained, initial statistical tests for the verification of the hypotheses posed, have been carried out to see whether the structure and design were suitably divided.

After the pretests had been carried out, the link to the questionnaire was switched online and contact was established, as described in the introduction to the chapter (Albaum et al., 1979; Ballinger & Davey, 1998; Boparai, Singh, & Kathuria, 2018; de Jong, Dorer, Lee, Yan, & Villar, 2018; Hite et al., 1976).

3.4. The resonance

In total, the page with the start and invitation to participate in the questionnaire reached the number of 1,349 respondents. The questionnaire was completed 783 times, of which 56 versions of the questionnaire were invalid. Ultimately, a number of n = 727 participants was reached and this sample size was in line with similar prior studies (in. al. (MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999; Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). These break down as follows:

- German consumers delivered 255 fully answered questionnaires.
- 215 completed questionnaires came from Polish consumers and finally there were
- 257 completed questionnaires from Russian consumers.

Furthermore, in order to investigate the research questions, it was necessary to divide the responses into the age structures as described in Chapter 1.5. According to this, table no. 4 presents the age group breakdown that was achieved.

Table 4 Breakdown of responses by age group according to Berkup

German	Generation	Quantity	Percent
	Baby Boomers	38	14.9 %
	Generation X	70	27.5 %
	Generation Y	139	54.5 %
	Generation Z	8	3.1 %
Polish	Generation	Quantity	Percent
	Baby Boomers	55	25.6 %
	Generation X	68	31.6 %
	Generation Y	62	28.8 %
	Generation Z	30	14 %
Russian	Generation	Quantity	Percent
	Baby Boomers	35	13.6 %
	Generation X	80	31.1 %
	Generation Y	105	40.9 %
	Generation Z	37	14.4 %

Source: Own elaboration

The survey generated data which could be analyzed in many ways, depending on the point of interest. In order to meet the requirement of structuring the outputs of the survey, a general introduction to the data situation is necessary. The following table no. 5 does justice to this claim:

Table 5 General information about the household size and structure of the participating

German	Household Size	Quantity	Percent	Thereof with children
	1	26	10.2 %	0 %
	2	86	33.7 %	8.1 %
	3	53	20.8 %	88.7 %
	4	71	27.8 %	93 %
	5	12	4.7 %	100 %
	6	7	2.7 %	100 %
	>6	0	0 %	
Polish	**Household Size**	**Quantity**	**Percent**	**Thereof with children**
	1	19	8.8 %	0 %
	2	51	23.7 %	21.6 %
	3	55	25.6 %	81.8 %
	4	58	27 %	93.1 %
	5	18	8.4 %	88.9 %
	6	11	5.1 %	72.7 %
	>6	2	0.9 %	100 %
Russian	**Household Size**	**Quantity**	**Percent**	**Thereof with children**
	1	48	18.7 %	0 %
	2	54	21 %	51.9 %
	3	73	28.4 %	79.5 %
	4	57	22.2 %	91.2 %
	5	16	6.2 %	93.8 %
	6	3	1.2 %	100 %
	>6	3	1.2 %	66.7 %

Source: Own elaboration

Looking at the data on German consumers, the first thing that stands out is that one third of respondents lived in a household with one other person and another third lived in a household with 4 people. The more people in the household, the greater the proportion of households with children. The remaining third was distributed among households with 3 persons (20.8%), with the last 9.2% falling among the other household sizes.

The above stated "German" structure does not apply to the households of Polish consumers. Among the Polish participants, a rough division into quarters can be identified: A quarter of the respondents lived in a 4-person household, another quarter lived with 3 persons, the next quarter represented households with 2 persons, finally the last quarter was distributed among the other household sizes. What was striking here is the distribution of the shares of those living with children in a household. 21% lived with a child in a 2-person household. It could be assumed they are single parents. By comparison, the rate of single parents with one child in Germany is 8.1%.

The household size distribution of the Russian participants again showed a different picture: The largest group of respondents lived in a 3-person household (28,4%). This was followed, with a similar distribution, by 2-person households (21%) and households in which 4 persons lived together (22,2%). The proportion of children in a 2-person household was over 51,9%. The remaining share of respondents was distributed among the remaining household sizes.

3.4.1. Age structure of the participants

Based on the data collected, visibility is given to the age structure of the participants on figure no. 15. The study investigated the extent to which purchasing decisions regarding confectionery differ within different age groups. For this purpose, the participants were divided into age groups according to Berkup.

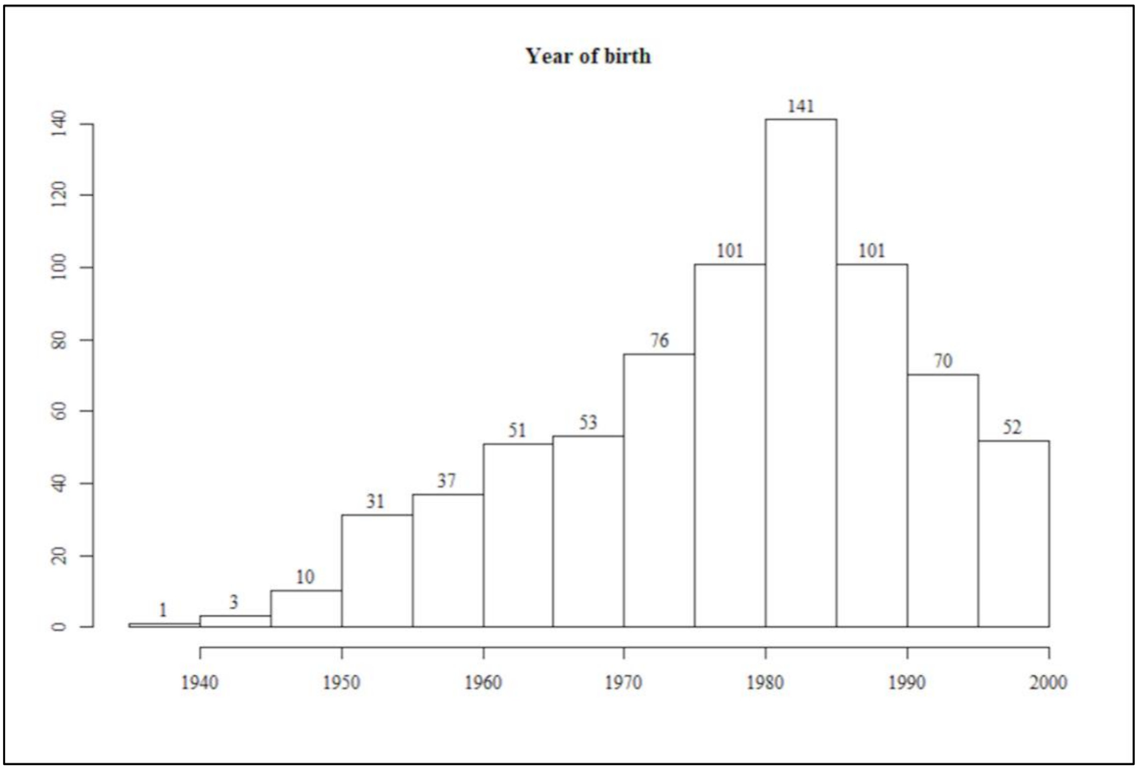


Figure 15. Age distribution of participants

Source: Own elaboration

The breakdown by age and country is provided on table no. 4 and it shows an interesting picture. Whereas German consumers are largely represented by Generation Y (54,5%), Polish consumers are almost equally divided between Generations X (31,6%) and Y (28,8%). The biggest generation group of Russian consumers is generation Y (40,9%). Hence, generation Y is predominating, when it comes to the age structure of the survey outcome at hand. Taking a look at the age distribution per country, it is worth noting that German consumers belonging to the generation Z reached a participation quota of 8,1% and the group of baby boomers had a 14,9% share. For the Polish participants the outcome reveals an almost equally distributed field, while focusing on a breakdown by age: Generation Z is represented with a share of 14%, and the generation of baby boomers is represented with a share of 25,6%. Finally, as already mentioned above, although for Russian participants generation Y dominates (40,9%), the other age clusters are represented, too: The group of baby boomers has a proportion of 13,6%, generation X 31,1% and generation Z 14,4%. In sum, "Baby Boomers" added with generation Z make $^1/_3$ of overall participants, generation Y another third and generation X is also deputized.

3.4.2. Economic conditions of the participants

Following the interest to state general data at the beginning of the hypotheses´ verification, the economic condition of the participants has to be studied, before statements about influence of the price on the purchase decision can be classified further. This approach to the indirect question on financial situation was in line with B. Marciniak, R. Baran and T. Taranko (Marciniak, Baran, & Taranko, 2017, pp. 56–57). Most of the participants in the study have answered that their economic condition is "good" (see figures no. 16 und no. 17).

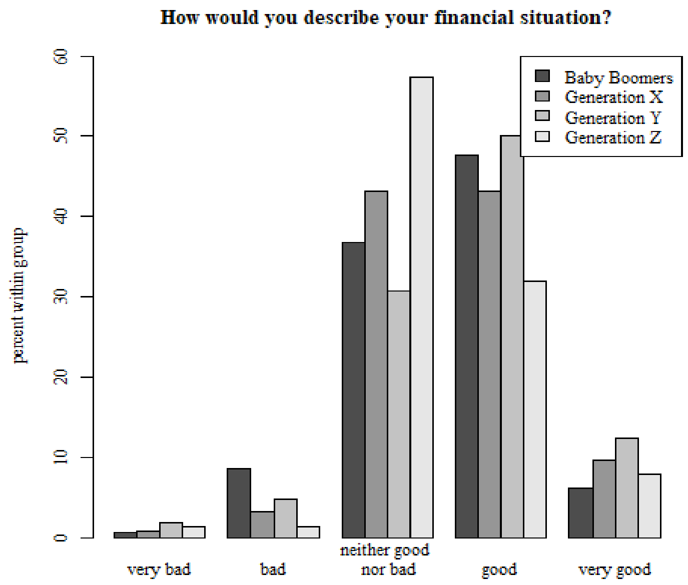


Figure 16. Distribution of responses regarding own economic situation, clustered into generations

Source: Own elaboration

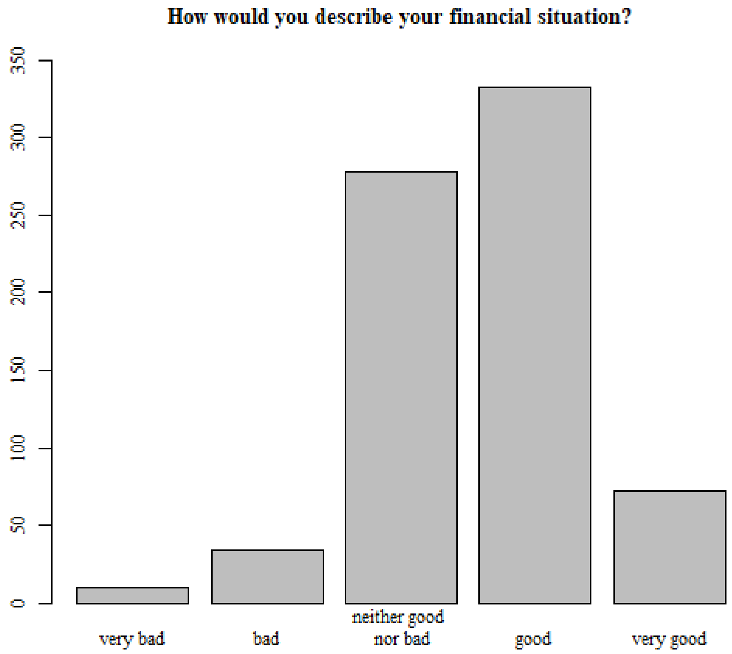


Figure 17. Distribution of responses regarding own economic situation, in total

Source: Own elaboration

On the above figure it can be summed up those participants belonging to the generation Z classify their economic condition as “neither good nor bad”, whereas generation Y feels to live in a “good” economic situation. Responses from generation X are distributed between the both beforementioned conditions. “Baby Boomers” see themselves in a “good” economic condition.

3.5. The data analysis and hypotheses testing

The subjects of this study are different groups and three different countries; therefore, the analysis of variance was used for the statistical analysis. This allows several groups to be compared with each other. To be precise, the mean values and the variances of the respective groups are compared with each other. If the mean values differ within the groups, this effect can also be used to perform further analyses. For example, the effect was used here to examine the independent variable in more detail. This was possible with the help of the analysis of variance.

If the group means differ significantly, then this is an indication that the variance between the groups is greater than within. The analysis of variance provides the result whether this is the case (Harris, 2019). However, for further investigation and to clarify exactly which groups differ and how significantly, a post hoc test is needed. In this study, the challenge was met using the Tukey test. The Tukey test can be applied to approximately equal group sizes. It compares the different group combinations and determines at which point exactly a statistical significance exists.

The hypotheses were tested in two ways: Descriptive statistics were used to sort and process the available data that were made as statements to the questions from the questionnaire. In the descriptive analysis, the findings were collected. Since the questionnaire was divided into sections from the beginning, the sections could be assigned to the hypotheses. The results were presented in tables or as graphs (Rendón-Macías, Villasís-Keever, & Miranda-Novales, 2016; Russo, 2021; Salaria, 2012; Vignali, Hallier, & Stanton, 2015). Independent variables of main interest are the countries (i.e., the language) and the generation. As both of them are categorical variables, a one-way factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated. In the calculation, dependencies between the variables were determined, which indicate by means of the p-value whether there is statistical significance in the relationship. For the pairwise comparisons of the countries or generations, a post hoc analysis was done by use of the Tukey (Lawner Weinberg & Knapp Abramowitz, 2002).

When considering several populations, an ANOVA only tests whether there are any significant differences between any of the populations (Harris, 2019). In order to investigate in detail which populations differ from other populations, the Tukey test does a multiple pairwise comparison between all means of the different populations. By doing a comparison of the means of the different populations, the test also provides a measure for effect sizes. While a simple t-test is only suitable for the comparison of two populations, the Tukey test can also be used for multiple comparisons between more than two populations. In case of multiple comparisons, the well-known problem of inflating p values arises. In contrast to the t-test, the problem of inflating p-values is taken into account by the Tukey test.

CHAPTER 4
CONSUMERS ON THE THREE CONFECTIONERY MARKETS IN THE LIGHT OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Attributes of confectionery influencing the consumers' decisions

From this dissertation's perspective, motivation of buying confectionery products belongs to the key research questions, with a special attention to the sustainability concept. The topic of sustainability has been on the agenda of many consumers for many years. Research, but also the use of sustainable raw materials and sustainable products, now fills a wealth of literature (Bernyte, 2021; Golob et al., 2018; Nemetz, 2021; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). The present work deals with confectionery and therefore, in terms of sustainability, the elaboration is limited to this very industry. The motives for buying sustainable foods vary. A market survey conducted by the Nielsen Institute in 2017 for Germany shows that even the so-called "omnivores" pay attention to a conscious diet and among them there are around 11% who prefer organic foods (Nielsen, n.d.). The results are presented on figure no. 18.

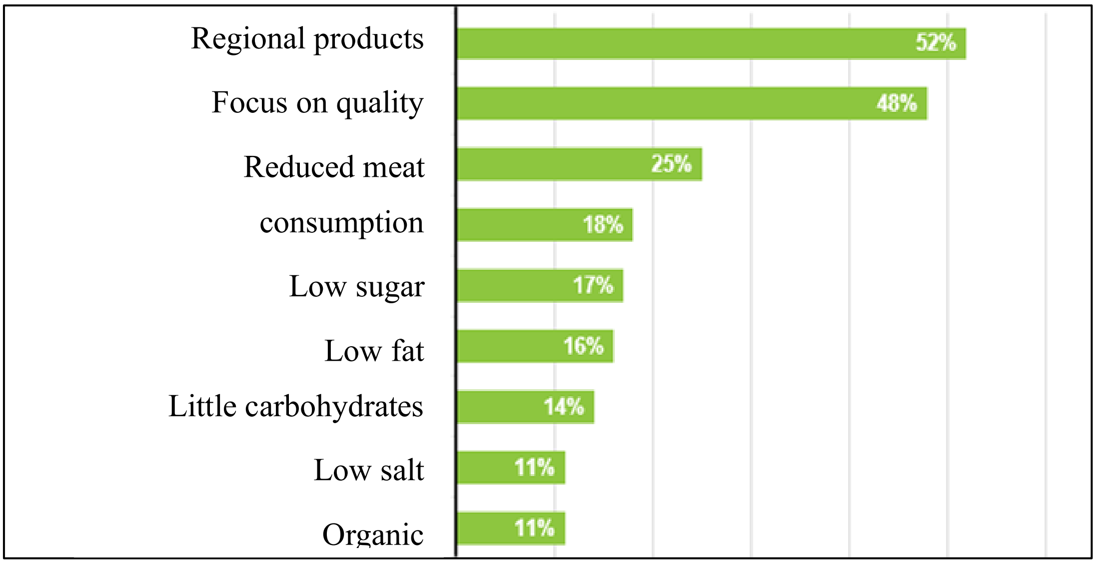


Figure 18. Graphic on the subject of which attributes so-called omnivores pay attention to

Source: https://www.nielsen.com/at/de/insights/report/2017/bewusste-esser-2017/ retrieved on 11th October 2021.

From the literature research, it was Hofstede or de Mooij, just to name two, who supported the idea that each country has to be screened independently from other countries and thus also has to be supplied very individually by the (confectionery) industry (de Mooij, 1998; de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Usunier, van Herk, & Lee, 2020). This is, among other things, one of the reasons why in intercultural marketing there is some mention of "typical German", "typical Polish" and "typical Russian" consumers. Not only the developments in the context of globalization, but also the further digitalization of the world, play a major role. The survey on these three markets brought evidence about how close markets are, when it comes to sweets. In addition, it became apparent that countries that are close to each other show common preferences at points where joint processing of the goods demanded may well lead to more efficient production utilization and thus relieve the environment ecologically. However, any ventures to unify a strategy for multiple consumer groups ("clusters") cannot ignore legal principles. For example, nutritional information is an indispensable part of the information that must be printed on each consumer unit (Halkier & Holm, 2006). In addition, nutritional information is also worth mentioning, because it must be included in every language of the country where these very items are sold. In order not to lose sight of the goal of the present work, legal aspects of packaging design are not investigated further. Part of the work is the combination of marketing strategies to reach several markets at the same time in order to maximize sales and optimize production processes. Additional results of the survey, relate to various product attributes, in order to examine the extent to which applied strategies in the past, are still proved to be correct. It was investigated whether the different appearance of the packaging plays a role in the purchase decision, furthermore the influence of price was considered, the ingredients and preservatives were considered, and also promotions and attributes such as fair trade, bio, vegan, have been investigated, too.

For the question “Please rate the following characteristics of a confectionery product as such. What features have an impact on your buying decision?”, the 5 items Likert scale was offered, where the middle of the scale meant a neutral answer: neither, nor. The scale was defined from 1, meaning completely insignificant impact to 5 meaning significant impact. Results represented a uniform opinion on all three markets. Leading attribute for buying confectionery goods is the taste, followed by ingredients, price and visible brand on packaging. Preservatives, promotions, sustainability and attributes corresponding to the way of life (bio, vegan, etc.) play only a subordinate role. Figure no. 19 presents the response distribution to the question regarding the impact on a buying decision.

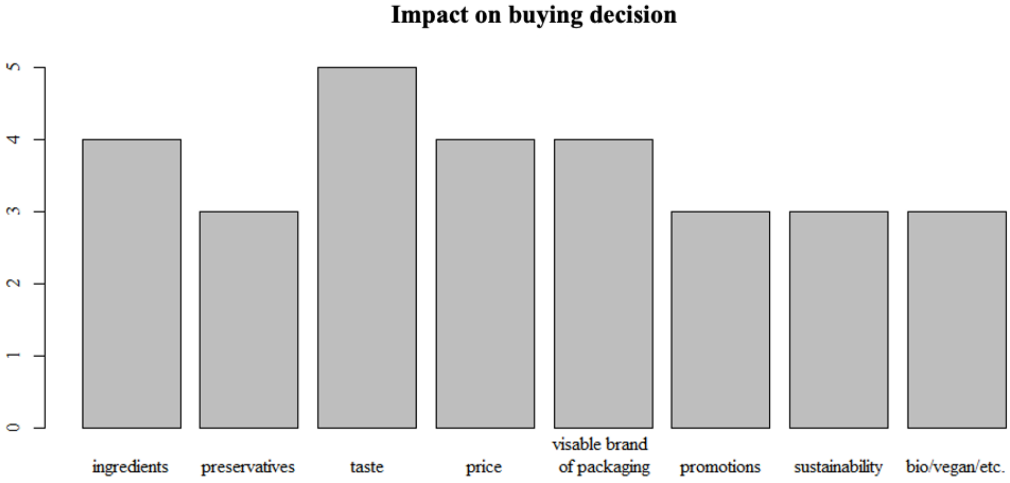


Figure 19. Summary of responses regarding the question on "Impact on buying decision"
Source: Own elaboration.

The extent to which and whether there is a significant connection between product attributes such as fair trade and the decision to buy confectionery was determined on the basis of calculations. For this purpose, each attribute was asked individually in the survey and then examined afterwards. These attributes are inspected in more detail in the following subchapters.

4.1.1. The importance of ingredients

Through the survey, the influence of various product attributes on the purchase decision were queried. Analysis of variance and the Tukey post hoc test where then used to check whether this characteristic actually is significant under statistical aspects, or not. But first, a look at the data should provide an overview. Since the differences in preferences in the respective markets are also interesting, the breakdown by country is selected below for this purpose. The following figure no. 20 shows the responses regarding ingredients, that could be derived from the questionnaire:

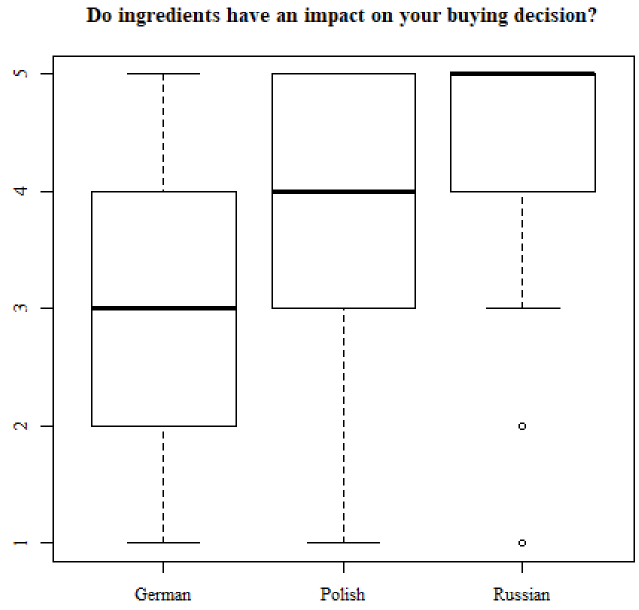


Figure 20. Responses from the questionnaire regarding the question "Do ingredients have an impact on your buying decision?"

Source: Own elaboration.

For the graphical representation of the answers, to the question "Do ingredients have an impact on your buying decision?", the boxplot was chosen. Boxplots are graphs that summarize data and show the minimum, first quarter, median, third quarter, and maximum. The advantage of a box plot is that certain characteristic values of a distribution can be read directly from the graphical representation (Franz, 2016). The first of the three quartiles represent the bottom of the box. 25% of the values lie below. The second quartile represents the 50% limit. Accordingly, this is where the median is located. The median is shown as a thick bar inside the box. The third quartile is the upper end of the box. This is the 75% limit. Outliers are shown as small circles.

Following this definition, figure no. 20 shows that, when it comes to sweets, ingredients have a bigger influence on the buying decision for Russian consumers than in Germany, whereas in Poland the consumers chose the influence degree between the two beforementioned. Ingredients are essential for sweets and their composition makes the taste, which in turn has a great influence on the purchase decision. If the ingredients themselves were produced sustainably, this could by all means have an effect on the purchase decision. Table no. 6 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 6 Analysis on impact of ingredients on buying decision

Do ingredients have an impact on your buying decision?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	69.53	<0.001	*
Generation	5.5	<0.001	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-0.95	<0.001	*
German - Russian	-1.18	<0.001	*
Polish - Russian	-0.23	0.095	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	0.01	0.999	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	0.32	0.059	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	0.5	0.023	*
Generation X - Generation Y	0.3	0.022	*
Generation X - Generation Z	0.48	0.015	*
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.18	0.668	

Source: Own elaboration

The result of the ANOVA shows that both independent variables have a highly significant effect: p-values are smaller than 0.05 for language and generation. The block in the middle gives calculations towards market preferences by use of the Tukey post hoc test:

German – Polish: Ingredients have, for the Polish consumers, a significantly greater influence on the buying decision than for the German consumers.

German – Russian: Ingredients have, for the Russian consumers, a significantly greater influence on the buying decision than for the German consumers.

Polish – Russian: There is no significant influence of ingredients on the purchase decision for or against sweets, between Russian and Polish consumers.

Finally, the results of the Tukey post-hoc test also show the effect for different age groups: Ingredients have a significantly greater influence on the buying decision for generation Z, than for the "Baby Boomers". At the same time, consumers belonging to generation Y or Z feel that ingredients have a significant impact, more than consumers belonging to generation X.

Concluding the interpretations on the outcome of the above stated analysis, it is a matter of fact that ingredients play a measurable and important role when it comes to sweets.

Preservatives are repeatedly the focus of discussions in the food industry. On the one hand, because some of them are produced synthetically and, on the other, because consumers have developed a fundamental aversion to them. However, the negative attitude towards them is in cases where basic nutrients are involved (Aziz & Karboune, 2018; Dharmalingam & Palanisamy, 2019; Spaargaren & Van Vliet, 2014). Fortunately, they play a rather minor role in the purchase of confectionery. Nevertheless, they influence the purchase decision, so that this attribute was also picked up and queried in the survey. How do German, Polish, and Russian consumers view the addition of preservatives? The following figure no. 21 shows the boxplot from the survey results; it serves as an initial orientation.

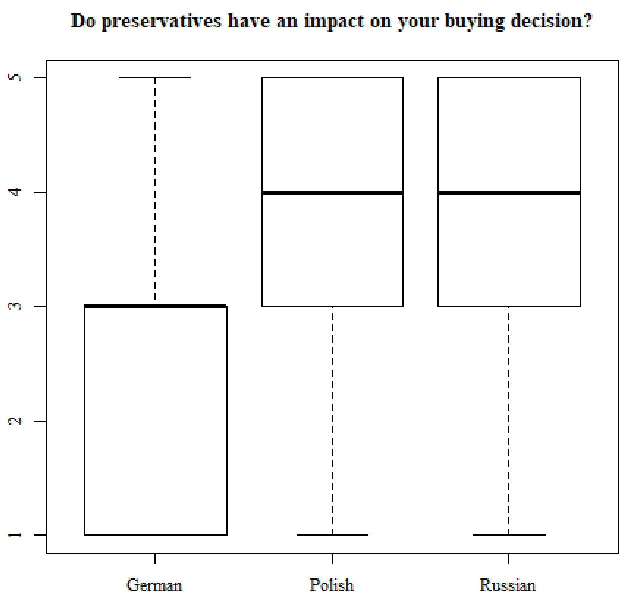


Figure 21. Responses from the questionnaire regarding the question "Do preservatives have an impact on your buying decision?"

Source: Own elaboration.

Preservatives are not an exclusion criterion, as previously assumed. In the trend development of confectionery, preservatives have been assigned a much more important role. However, while preservatives do seem to play a role in these three markets, they do not prevent people from continuing to consume confectionery. It is striking, that German consumers are rather neutral about the addition of preservatives. According to their own statements, they do not significantly influence purchasing behavior. Polish and Russian consumers, on the other hand, are on average influenced by the fact whether preservatives are contained in a product or not. The analysis of variance provides more detailed information. Table no. 7 shows the results and underpins to what extent preservatives affect purchasing behavior.

Table 7 Analysis on impact of preservatives on buying decision

Do preservatives have an impact on your buying decision?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	65.94	<0.001	*
Generation	8.74	<0.001	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-1.18	<0.001	*
German - Russian	-1.14	<0.001	*
Polish - Russian	0.04	0.928	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	0.19	0.578	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	0.51	<0.001	*
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	0.8	<0.001	*
Generation X - Generation Y	0.33	0.026	*
Generation X - Generation Z	0.61	0.003	*
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.29	0.341	

Source: Own elaboration

The outcome of the calculations shows in the first block that in general preservatives have a significant influence on the buying decision of sweets for consumers on the investigated market, but the effect is stronger for Polish and Russian consumers, in comparison to German consumers, which can be read in the middle block of table no. 7. In order to comprehend the influence of preservatives further, the investigation of generation-related differences is of help. For generation Y and Z, preservatives have a significant influence on the buying decision compared to the group of baby boomers and also compared to the generation X.

4.1.2. Role of taste

Among other things, both beforementioned attributes, ingredients and preservatives, have an essential, direct influence on the taste. It is not surprising that the taste as such has been chosen with full conviction and clearly as the purchase criterion par excellence, by all participants (see figure no. 22):

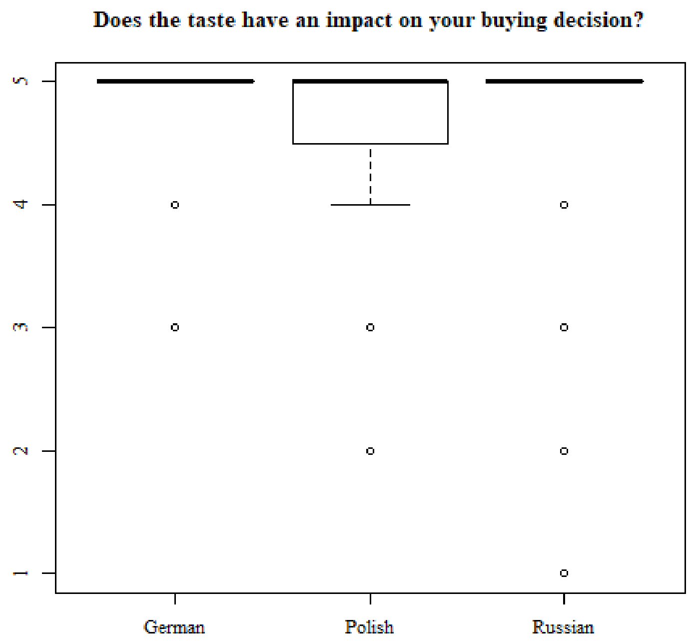


Figure 22. Responses from the questionnaire regarding the question "Does the taste have an impact on your buying decision?"

Source: Own elaboration.

German and Russian consumers agree on the taste. Taste is the essential criterion that influences the purchase decision for sweets on these markets. Here, it is the most important component. Additionally, analysis of variance shows that for Polish consumers taste has significantly more influence on the buying decision than for German consumers, because the p-value on these combinations of countries have a value higher than 0,05. This is visualized in table no. 8. Another interesting fact is indeed that a differentiation in age cluster does not result in any significant influence of one group against the other.

Table 8 Analysis on impact of the taste on buying decision

Does the taste have an impact on your buying decision?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	5.5	0.004	*
Generation	1.76	0.153	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	0.15	0.01	*
German - Russian	0.07	0.269	
Polish - Russian	-0.07	0.302	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	-0.01	0.996	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	-0.1	0.28	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	-0.09	0.669	
Generation X - Generation Y	-0.09	0.241	
Generation X - Generation Z	-0.07	0.719	
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.01	0.997	

Source: Own elaboration

4.1.3. Attributes corresponding to the way of life and nutrition

At this point, the attributes of daily life are also examined for the influence they represent as long as no purchase decision has been made. In understanding whether something is organic or vegan, this alone is no longer important today. Marketing has also detected a competitive advantage for a company's marketing activities here, because these attributes have now become a way of life (Baranek, 2007). Figure no. 23 presents the outcome after an examination of how far these attributes influence purchasing behavior toward confectionery.

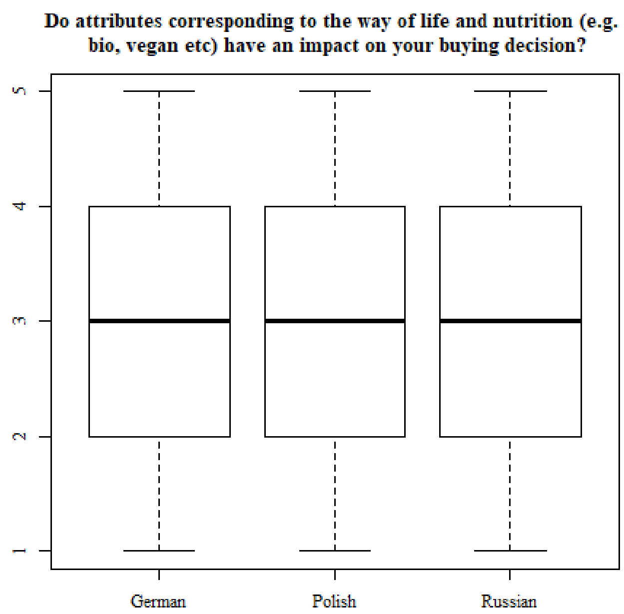


Figure 23. Responses from the questionnaire regarding the question "Do attributes corresponding to the way of life and nutrition (e.g., bio, vegan, etc.) have an impact on your buying decision?"

Source: Own elaboration.

When it comes to confectionery goods attributes corresponding to the way of life and nutrition, are not significantly influencing the purchase decision. At least, these attributes are not essential for a purchasing decision. The attentive observer, however, notices that although these attributes do not play a significant role for or against the purchase decision on confectionery goods, they are presented as important, or at least, decisive for the purchase in other industries. In retail, one observes more and more often that customers are attracted by advertising regarding "sustainability" or "fair trade" or even "organic". Ultimately, this type of purchase incentive is not reflected in the confectionery. The survey outcome showed that these criteria do not play as big a role in confectionery as they are attributed to and also the calculations support this fact, which are displayed in table 9.

Table 9 Analysis on impact of attributes corresponding to the way of life on buying decision

Do attributes corresponding to the way of life and nutrition (e.g., bio, vegan etc.) have an impact on your buying decision?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	0.7	0.495	
Generation	0.1	0.961	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-0.12	0.6	
German - Russian	-0.11	0.66	
Polish - Russian	0.02	0.988	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	0.05	0.985	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	0.08	0.949	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	0.04	0.997	
Generation X - Generation Y	0.02	0.997	
Generation X - Generation Z	-0.01	1	
Generation Y - Generation Z	-0.04	0.997	

Source: Own elaboration

Analysis of variance and the multiple comparisons by use of the post hoc test do not reveal any significant difference (see table 9). In the end, therefore, it remains to be said that these product characteristics do not play a role in the purchase of confectionery.

4.1.4. Sustainable activities exposed

On the confectionery market, sustainability can be achieved through fair traded raw materials, or packaging of the product, or by consideration of the both. However, the question being addressed here is whether taking this aspect into account has any influence at all on the purchase decision. The distribution of answers shall give an overview and is presented on figure no. 24.

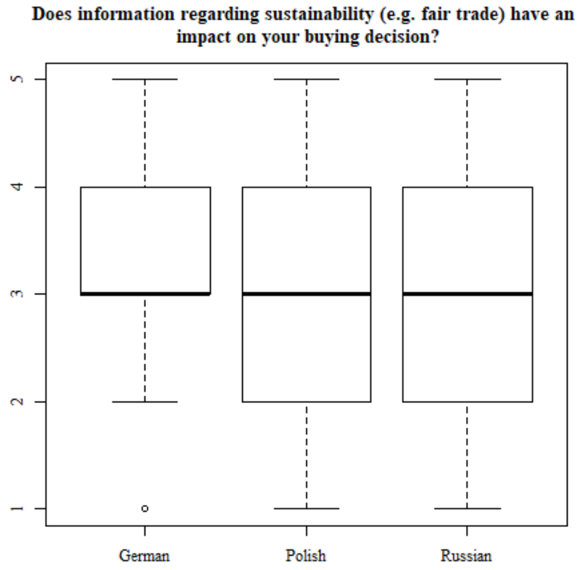


Figure 24. Responses from the questionnaire regarding the question "Does information regarding sustainability (e.g., fair trade) have an impact on your buying decision?"

Source: Own elaboration.

The median is 3 for all three markets and is thus exactly the middle. Accordingly, this is a neutral response, indicating that most of the feedback tends to give no indication of the degree of influence. The distribution of given answers however, indicates that for the German consumers sustainability either has a neutral influence, or a significant, because the responses vary between 3 and 4. Response-distribution of Polish and Russian consumers on the other hand varies between 2 and 4. However, the ANOVA shows that these differences are not significant so that in the consequence sustainability has no significant influence on the buying decision of confectionery goods (see table no. 10).

Table 10 Analysis on impact of information regarding sustainability on buying decision

Does information regarding sustainability (e.g., fair trade) have an impact on your buying decision?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	1.4	0.246	
Generation	0.68	0.566	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	0.19	0.262	
German - Russian	0.03	0.96	
Polish - Russian	-0.16	0.376	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	0.04	0.99	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	0.1	0.869	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	0.24	0.554	
Generation X - Generation Y	0.06	0.952	
Generation X - Generation Z	0.2	0.646	
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.14	0.836	

Source: Own elaboration

4.1.5. Consumers towards price and price incentives

The price is decisive for the consumption of goods, for an active participation in a market, for any kind of exchange, trade, etc. The price is the value of the good that one is willing to pay in order to receive this same good. There are certainly people who would pay a high price for delicious chocolate and others who would not do so at all. When it comes to confectionery, there are big differences in quality that are reflected in the price. Consumers in the markets studied have a uniform opinion on the price of confectionery, as the figure no. 25 shows.

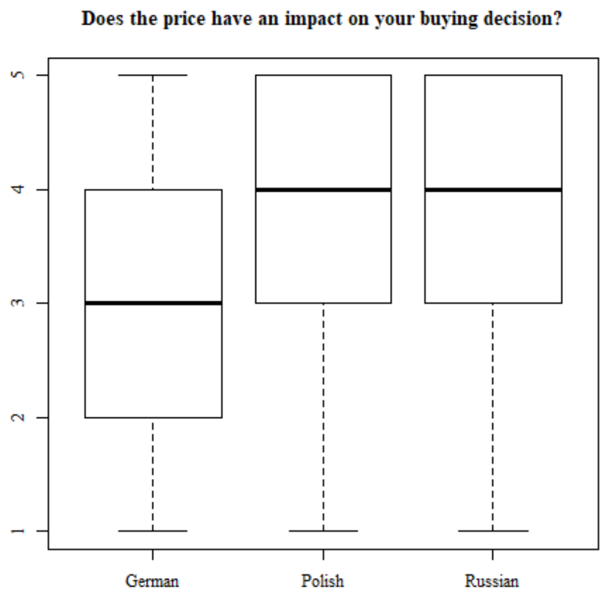


Figure 25. Responses from the questionnaire regarding the question "Does the price have an impact on your buying decision?"

Source: Own elaboration.

The price is just as decisive for the purchase. The microeconomic consumption function implies this attribute as a fixed component and explains why price has an impact on each individual consumption. However, the results of the survey show that while price has some influence on confectionery consumption, it is not a clear determinant. This may well be due to the fact that confectionery is already available in the low-price sector. And on the other hand, confectionery can also be purchased for a very high price. Depending on their income, consumers are therefore free to choose the product they are able to buy. Finally, the statement that price plays a role can be accepted. It should be borne in mind that the income levels in the markets surveyed differ, and this in turn is reflected in consumption. Table no. 11 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 11 Analysis on impact of the price on buying decision

Does the price have an impact on your buying decision?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	31.3	<0.001	*
Generation	0.61	0.609	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-0.62	<0.001	*
German - Russian	-0.76	<0.001	*
Polish - Russian	-0.14	0.397	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	0.08	0.934	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	0.01	1	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	-0.13	0.867	
Generation X - Generation Y	-0.07	0.901	
Generation X - Generation Z	-0.21	0.544	
Generation Y - Generation Z	-0.14	0.809	

Source: Own elaboration

From the first and the second block on table no. 11, it can be derived what figure no. 25 has already displayed: In comparison to German consumers, Polish and Russian participants on the confectionery market feel a significantly higher grade of influence of the price in their buying decision, since for the combinations a p-value smaller than 0,05 was calculated. However, no significant effect of generations could be detected.

4.1.6. Promotion of sweets from the consumer perspective

The previous aspects concerning the price automatically led to the question, how promotions may influence the buying behavior. Price incentives are a marketing tool to generate more sales, within a concrete time interval and also for a special good (Skitmore & Smyth, 2009). Hence, in the due course the purchase of expensive goods is made possible, for those who were not able to afford this very same before a price incentive was established. For the German, Polish, and Russian confectionery market the survey outcome revealed that German consumers do not feel influenced by promotional offers, whereas Polish and Russian consumers show a clear importance of promotions on their purchasing behavior towards confectionery. Figure no. 26 presents the results in a box plot.

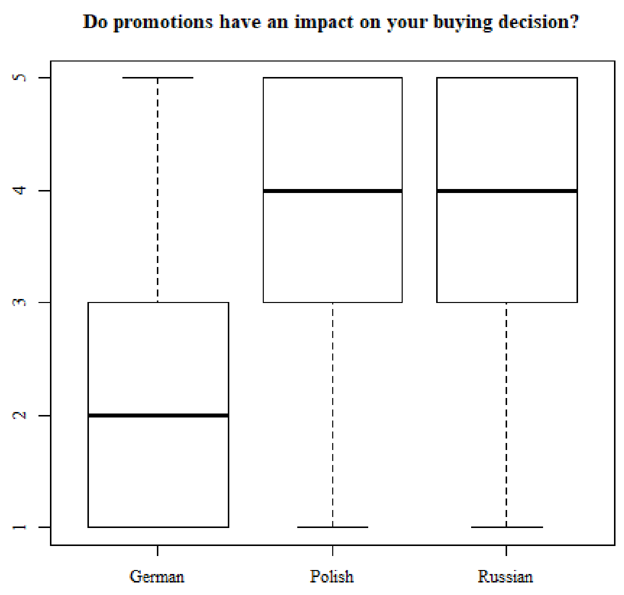


Figure 26. Responses from the questionnaire regarding the question "Do promotions have an impact on your buying decision?"

Source: Own elaboration.

From figure no. 26 it can be concluded that in Germany, offers play a less important role in the purchase decision for or against confectionery. In Poland and Russia, these offers are certainly an interesting, sales-increasing tool. This may be due to the fact that purchasing power in these countries is a bit lower than in Germany. With lower incomes, consumers are more likely to consider whether and how much of a non-essential good – namely chocolate or sweets, for example - can be purchased. Thus, if offers are used, more of the product can be purchased, as if the price was correspondingly higher. In Poland as well as in Russia sweets play a quite constantly given role, so that the purchase of these goods is natural. Only the quantity varies depending on income. In order to complete the investigation, analysis of variance was calculated (see table no. 12).

Table 12 Analysis on impact of promotions on buying decision

Do promotions have an impact on your buying decision?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	112.58	<0.001	*
Generation	2.29	0.077	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-1.46	<0.001	*
German - Russian	-1.35	<0.001	*
Polish - Russian	0.11	0.575	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	-0.26	0.209	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	-0.33	0.047	*
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	-0.26	0.433	
Generation X - Generation Y	-0.07	0.908	
Generation X - Generation Z	0	1	
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.07	0.973	

Source: Own elaboration

First of all, it is to mention that analysis of variance has underlined, that the effect of promotions on the buying decision depends on the market, but hardly on the generation. Further, the effect between Polish and Russian consumers is significantly stronger than for German consumers. In respect of a view on age differences, the post hoc test only finds a barely significant difference between generation Y and baby boomers (p = 0.047) but the overall effect of generation is only weakly significant (p = 0.077).

4.1.7. Summary on the findings of confectionary products' attributes influencing buyers' decisions

In closing, figure no. 27 will help to compare the different influencing factors, broken down by age structure.

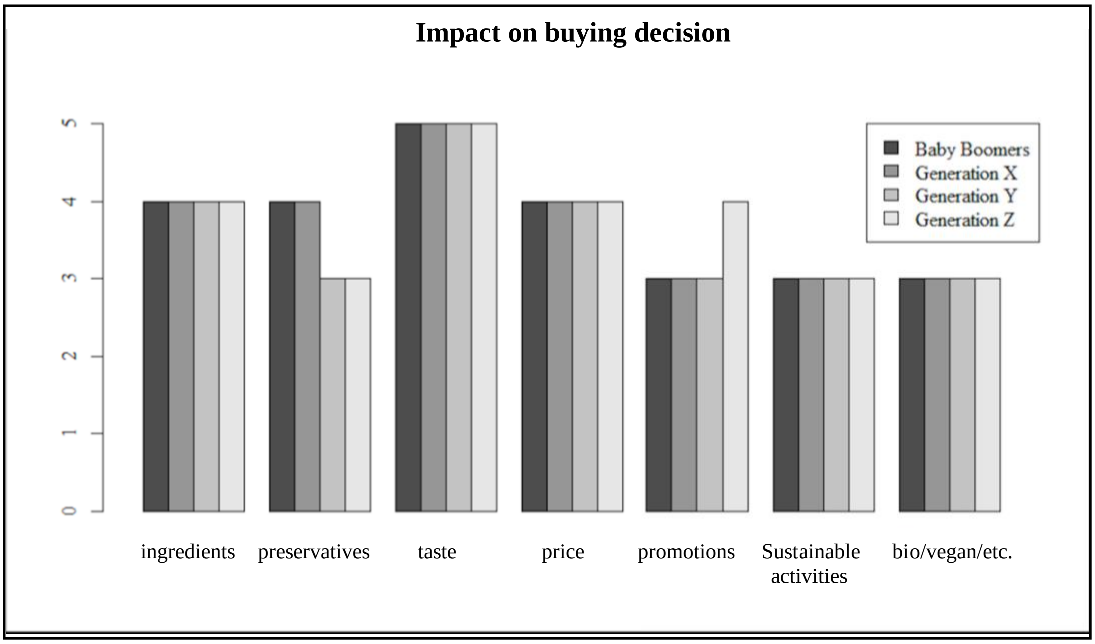


Figure 27. Summary of influencing factors on buying decision, divided by age

Source: Own elaboration.

Hypothesis H1 assumes that sustainable production of confectionery leads to increased consumption. However, the present results refute this and show rather that consumers of confectionery rely on other product attributes than on the reference to sustainable production methods. Among the participants, there is agreement on the following attributes as influencing purchase factors: Taste, ingredients, price, and for the older interviewed market participants, also the preservatives. These three, resp. four, of the total of eight queried characteristics, are the ones that influence the purchase decision regarding confectionery products most. Coming to the market-specific-perspective, some slight differences between the German consumers against the other two markets surface. Hypothesis H1 “Sustainable production of confectionery goods leads to increased consumption” is rejected.

For the Germans the taste is most important and the decisive purchasing factor in the first place. Promotions on the contrary are to be neglected within the purchase decision procedure. As far as the other attributes are concerned, the German consumer of sweets is not influenced in his/her decision by them.

For the Polish consumer, taste is also a crucial decisive factor. The Polish consumers however feel a stronger impact of the other attributes regarding the buying decision for or against sweets, namely they are: Ingredients, preservatives, price and promotions. Sustainability and attributes corresponding the way of life (bio/vegan/etc.) are rated neutral.

Russian consumers of sweets are close to the results coming from Polish consumers: Taste again finds significant approval and ingredients are also weighted similarly. Impact of preservatives, price, and promotions follow. In line with the Polish consumer, sustainability and attributes corresponding the way of life (bio/vegan/etc.) are rated neutral.

For all respondents of the survey, taste remains most important for the purchase of sweets (see figure no. 28). And although one would have suspected that price has the greatest influence on the purchase decision, the results show that this is only partly the case and, if so, then primarily for the Polish and Russian markets in this study.

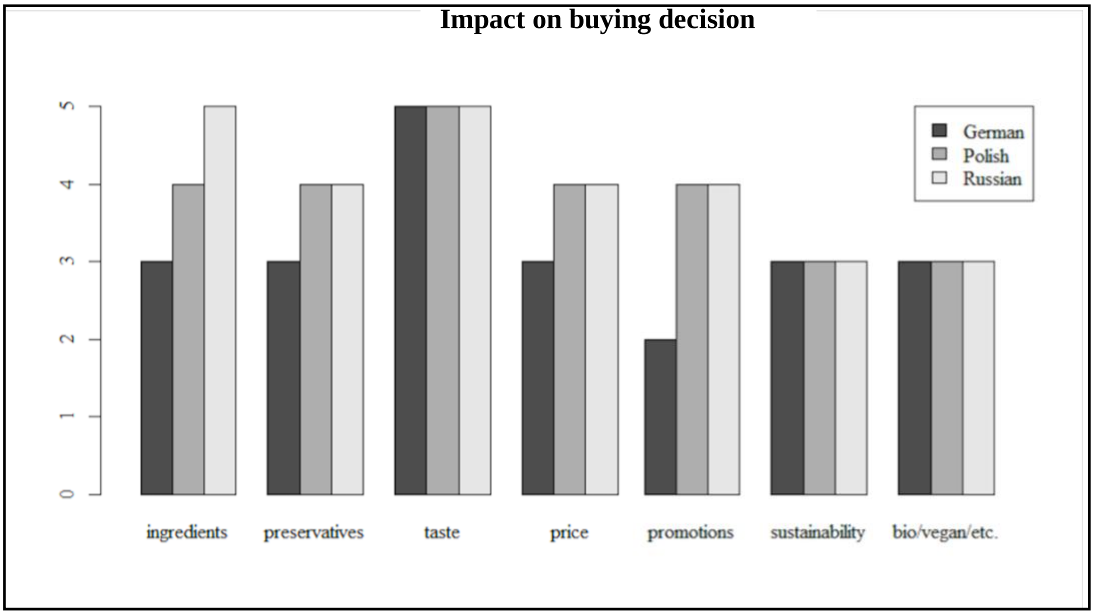


Figure 28. Summary of responses regarding impact on buying decision, divided by investigated markets

Source: Own elaboration.

4.2. Relations between country-specific production of confectionery and the buyers´ interest

In the literature review, both, the development of different marketing strategies associated with consumer behaviors and the impact of these activities were derived. This resulted in the insight that, if marketers want to conquer a market on the marketing side, the prevailing opinion is that there are country-specific things that have to be considered in order to be able to survive on the respective market in the long term (Cateora et al., 2011; Wilson, 2021). At this point, it is examined how this fact affects confectionery - and if at all. The hypothesis H2 assumes that country-specific processing of the markets for confectionery does not lead to higher demand and therefore the previous assumptions on the marketing side that it is mandatory to take account of country-specific characteristics would be obsolete for the confectionery industry.

4.2.1. Consumers and selected types of confectioneries

In the questionnaire, different versions of confectionery were queried using the question „Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 how much you like the following products... Where the middle of the scale means a neutral answer: neither, nor", linked to the request to classify how much one favors these. In this case, the 5-point Likert scale was provided to answer the question. The following types of confectionery were surveyed: Pure chocolate block, filled chocolate bar, waffles, pralines, candy, and jellies / gummies. Figure no. 29 presents the results for pure chocolate.

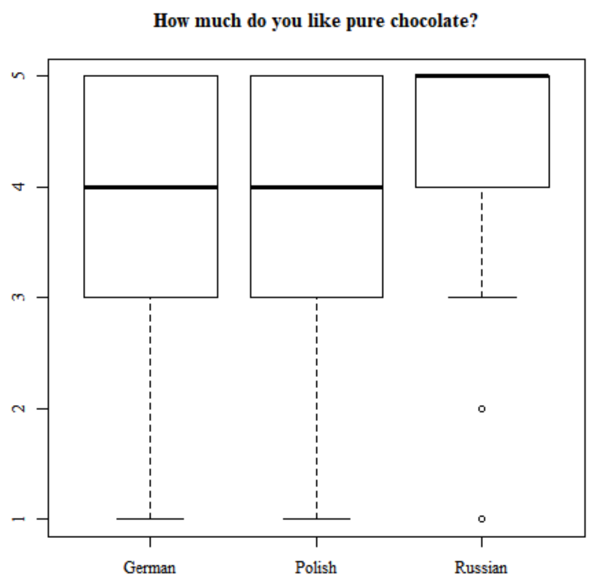


Figure 29. Responses to the question "How much do you like pure chocolate?"

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure no. 29 shows a box plot, that represents the results to the question “How much do you like pure chocolate?”. For all three markets it is supported that there is a favoritism towards pure chocolate. For the markets in Germany as well as in Poland, the median is 4 and for Russia even 5, where 5 represents the highest possible selection in the ranking with the meaning "I love it!". Thus, it remains to be noted that this sort is uniformly well received.

As mentioned at the beginning, other varieties were also queried. This was followed in the survey by the question about filled chocolate and the consumer's preference for it. Figure no. 30 presents the results.

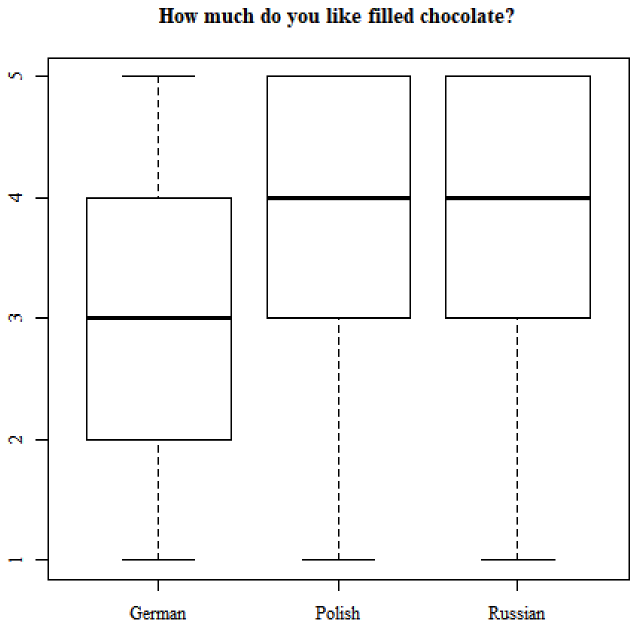


Figure 30. Responses to the question “How much do you like filled chocolate?”

Source: Own elaboration.

While the German participants showed a rather reserved opinion regarding filled chocolate, the Polish and Russian participants were not far apart and also showed a tendency analogous to the Germans, with a small nuance in the direction of favoring this variety (see figure no. 30). Therefore, a European marketing approach would be enriching to serve these markets successfully. A targeted, country-specific focus of sales activities does not automatically lead to more sales, because preferences are by no means divergent. Table no. 13 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 13 Analysis on preferences towards pure and filled chocolate

How much do you like pure chocolate?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	20.08	<0.001	*
Generation	0.72	0.541	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-0.31	0.008	*
German - Russian	-0.61	<0.001	*
Polish - Russian	-0.3	0.007	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	-0.08	0.92	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	0.02	0.999	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	0.12	0.863	
Generation X - Generation Y	0.09	0.765	
Generation X - Generation Z	0.2	0.514	
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.11	0.877	

How much do you like filled chocolate?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	33.72	<0.001	*
Generation	2.66	0.047	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-0.29	0.031	*
German - Russian	-0.86	<0.001	*
Polish - Russian	-0.57	<0.001	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	-0.35	0.047	*
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	-0.33	0.052	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	-0.26	0.447	
Generation X - Generation Y	0.02	0.998	
Generation X - Generation Z	0.09	0.945	
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.07	0.971	

Source: Own elaboration

From the results of the calculations on differences towards the favor of pure or filled chocolate, it is possible to conclude that there is a difference when it comes to a country comparison. For all combinations the p-value is smaller than 0.05 (see table no. 13). However, no significant difference of generations could be detected.

Continuing the analysis of confectionery preferences, preferences regarding wafers and pralines were queried. Wafers are popular in all three markets and are readily consumed (see figure no. 31). Pralines, on the other hand, are a special confectionery and are therefore not preferred to the same extent as wafers (see figure no. 32). In the original sense, these are both confectionery products that by no means pursue the same goal. The praline is usually small and intense in taste. It is not intended to be consumed en masse, but rather to appeal to the confectionery lover who is looking for a short and intense taste experience. Wafers, on the other hand, are quite different. These usually consist of a few components that are readily assembled in bulk to roll off the line in the appropriate quantity. The waffle is also used as a snack between meals and is consumed accordingly more often due to these characteristics. Summarized overview of the responses to the question “How much do you like waffles?” are presented on figure no. 31.

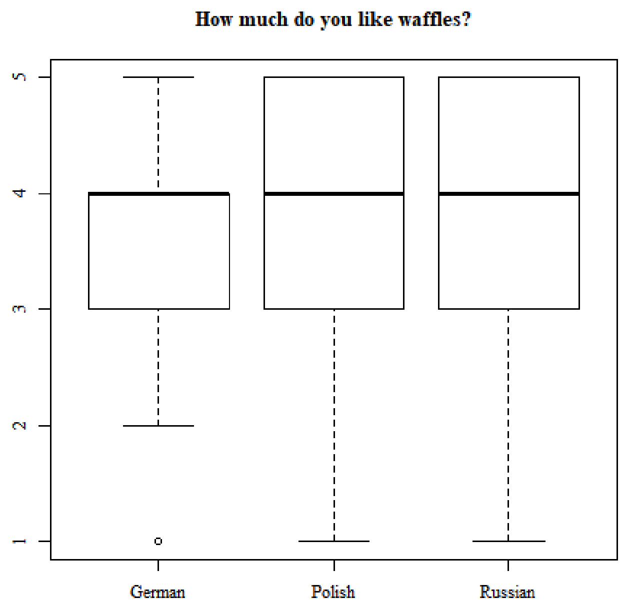


Figure 31. Responses to the question “How much do you like waffles?”

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure no. 32 shows the summarized answers to the question “How much do you like pralines?”.

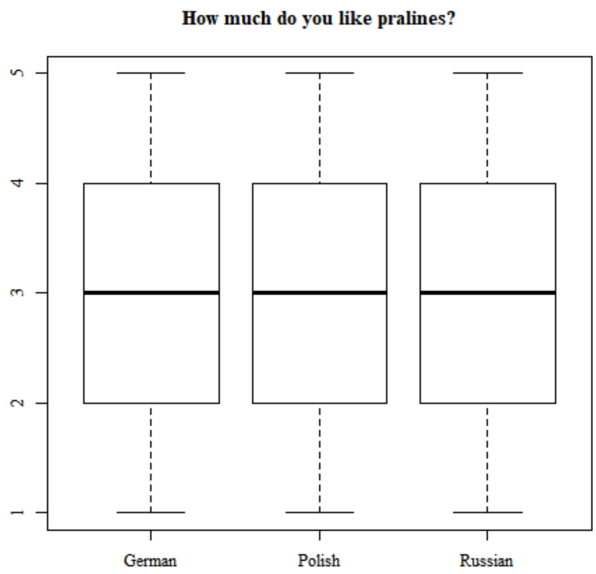


Figure 32. Responses to the question “How much do you like pralines?”

Source: Own elaboration.

Looking at the feedback from the survey participants as a whole, again, commonalities can be observed in preferences. In all three markets, the wafers are very well received, whereas the praline comes across as dispassionate in the midfield, as it is presented on figure no. 32. Table no. 14 presents the results of the analysis of variance.

Table 14 Analysis on preferences towards waffles and pralines

How much do you like waffles?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	0.59	0.557	
Generation	4.46	0.004	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-0.15	0.412	
German - Russian	0.03	0.966	
Polish - Russian	0.18	0.272	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	-0.27	0.202	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	-0.47	0.002	*
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	-0.42	0.093	
Generation X - Generation Y	-0.19	0.289	
Generation X - Generation Z	-0.15	0.809	
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.05	0.991	

How much do you like pralines?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	6.71	<0.001	*
Generation	3.4	0.017	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-0.51	<0.001	*
German - Russian	-0.33	0.017	*
Polish - Russian	0.18	0.308	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	-0.14	0.8	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	-0.1	0.889	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	0.41	0.153	
Generation X - Generation Y	0.03	0.993	
Generation X - Generation Z	0.55	0.013	*
Generation Y - Generation Z	0.52	0.018	*

Source: Own elaboration

Calculations on multiple comparison of the countries has revealed no significance for differences on the three markets. If the attention is turned to pralines, the calculated comparison of the three markets shows a significance, with p-values smaller than 0.05. When it comes to waffles, the favoritism is confirmed across countries, and when it comes to pralines, the participants of the survey were rather restrained.

Finally, the view remains on candy and jellies/gummies. In accordance with the formulated H2 hypothesis, the responses are considered on a country-specific basis (see figure no. 33).

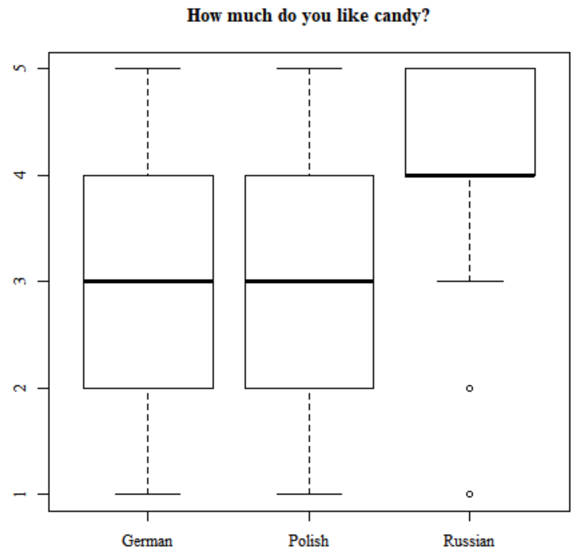


Figure 33. Responses to the question "How much do you like candy?"

Source: Own elaboration.

Based on the feedback on candy, which can be described further through examples, such as lollipops, or hard sugar candy, it can be seen that Russian consumers prefer this type of sugar confectionery the most. The German and also the Polish consumer is rather restrained with this product group and the preferences are distributed around the median (see figure no. 33). Figure no. 34 presents the result for the question "How much do you like jellies/gummies?".

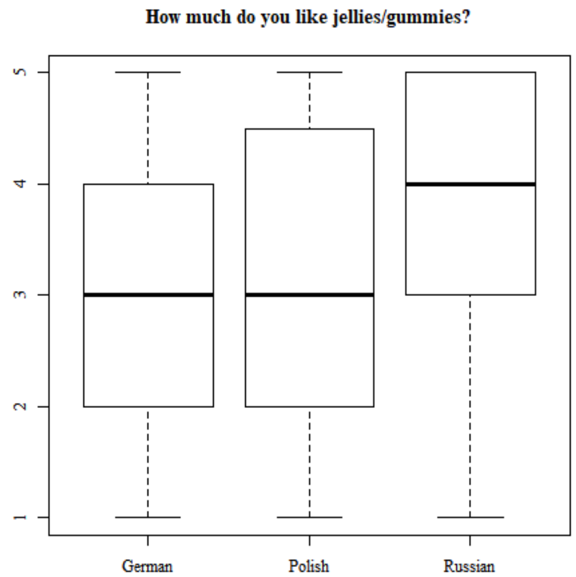


Figure 34. Responses to the question "How much do you like jellies/gummies?"

Source: Own elaboration.

Compared to the German and also Polish survey participants, jellies/gummies are preferred by the Russian consumers most. However, the distribution is scattered to the extent that there are definitely overlaps (see figure no. 34). For these types of confectionery, it is possible to standardize marketing endeavors and focus on all three markets as a whole. Table no. 15 presents the results of an analysis on preferences towards candy and jellies / gummies.

Table 15 Analysis on preferences towards candy and jellies/gummies

How much do you like candy?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	93.69	<0.001	*
Generation	2.13	0.095	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	-0.53	<0.001	*
German - Russian	-1.34	<0.001	*
Polish - Russian	-0.82	<0.001	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	-0.03	0.993	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	-0.23	0.221	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	-0.24	0.456	
Generation X - Generation Y	-0.2	0.206	
Generation X - Generation Z	-0.21	0.518	
Generation Y - Generation Z	-0.01	1	

How much do you like jellies/gummies?			
Effect	F value	p value	
Country	8.14	<0.001	*
Generation	1.81	0.144	
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
German - Polish	0.08	0.799	
German - Russian	-0.37	0.006	*
Polish - Russian	-0.45	<0.001	*
Multiple Comparisons	Difference	p value	
Baby Boomers - Generation X	0.15	0.749	
Baby Boomers - Generation Y	-0.11	0.877	
Baby Boomers - Generation Z	-0.14	0.892	
Generation X - Generation Y	-0.26	0.137	
Generation X - Generation Z	-0.29	0.373	
Generation Y - Generation Z	-0.03	0.998	

Source: Own elaboration

The results presented in table no. 15, show that there is a significant difference for all combinations of countries, in respect of candy consumption. If the focus of attention is now on the right side of the table, then there is a significance observable between the combination of Russian and German consumers and between Russian and Polish consumers. For both compositions the p-value is smaller than 0.05. Generational differences have revealed no significance in this case.

4.2.2. Relations between disposable income and frequency of consumption

The frequency of consumption is based on disposable income; this is true not only for confectionery, but for all goods. The hypothesis H2 states that a country-specific approach and a corresponding marketing and sales orientation does not lead to higher demand. This presupposes that a similar income structure prevails in the countries grouped together. This does not mean that wage levels are similar, but that the relationship between disposable income and prices is transferable. For this purpose, the focus is on the consumers themselves, which is why the question was asked about their perception of their financial situation and not about their actual income. Rather, the aim is to show that consumers decide "by instinct" whether and how much money to spend on confectionery.

For this study, consumers in Germany, Poland and Russia were asked how they perceived their financial situation. A 5-point Likert scale was used, with 1 being equal to the statement "very bad," the middle representing "neither good nor bad," and 5 meaning that the individual perceived his or her financial situation as "very good”. Figure no. 35 presents the results.

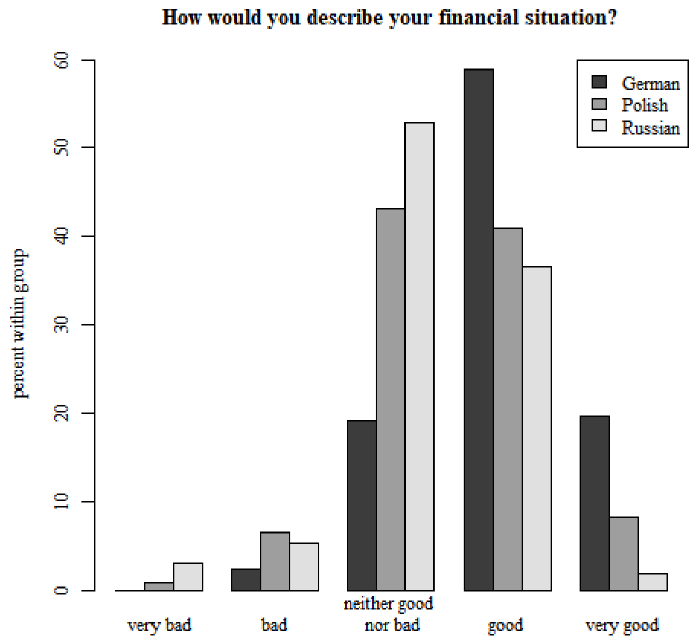


Figure 35. Responses to the question “How would you describe your financial situation?”

Source: Own elaboration.

Looking at the results as a whole (figure no. 35), it can be seen that most of the answers are in the midfield. German confectionery consumers perceive their financial situation as good. Most of the feedback from Polish consumers shows almost equally distributed responses of "neither good nor bad" and "good". Whereas the Russian consumer perceives his financial situation as quite mediocre, so that the majority of responses are on the point of "neither good nor bad" with a tendency towards "good". On balance, participants show a satisfied perception of their financial situation. Coming back to the question of how much the individual consumes on average, this point of interest was also asked in the questionnaire. The answers are distributed as follows on figure no. 36.

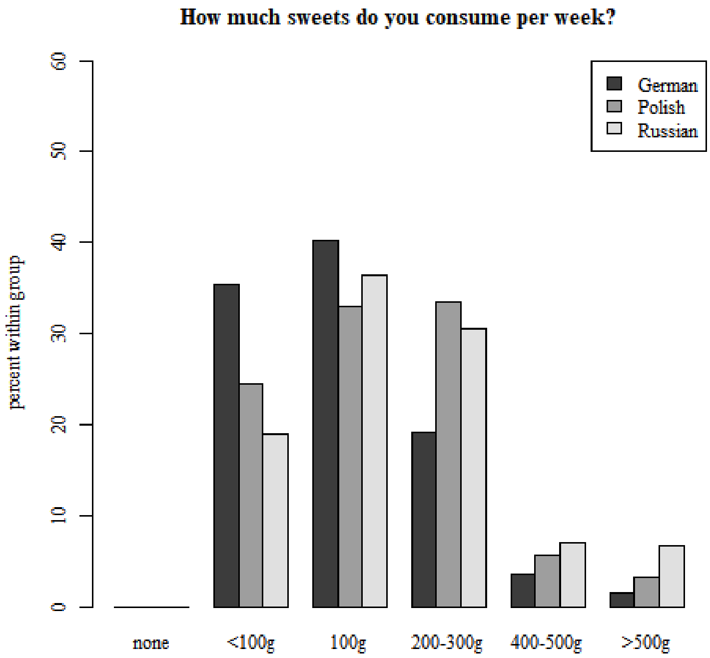


Figure 36. Responses to the question "How much do you consume per week?"

Source: Own elaboration.

It is astonishing how the results show tendencies towards smaller deviations, but equally the commonalities become visible. The German consumer tends to eat on average about 100g of sweets per week, with a slight tendency towards <100g. The Polish confectionery buyers from the survey agree with the Germans and tend to consume even slightly more than just 100g. Likewise the Russian consumer. On average, 100g are eaten per week, with a tendency towards 200-300g. It is worth noting that a bar of chocolate usually weighs 100g.

4.2.3. Summary

It is already known from the market research in chapter 2 that comparatively more sweets are consumed in Poland and also in Russia than in Germany ("Annual per capita consumption of sugar and confectionery products in Russia from 2010 to 2020," 2021; "Monthly consumption of chocolate per capita in Poland from 2012 to 2020," 2021; *Statista Consumer Market Outlook*, 2020). If one now looks at the available results, presented in this chapter, it can be confirmed that more sweets are indeed eaten in Poland and Russia, than in Germany and that consumption also takes place when disposable income does not feel as satisfactory. If the perception regarding disposable income is similar, it is indeed conceivable to consider these confectionery markets closed as one group. This is because there are hardly any differences in preferences for confectionery. The previous calculations and box plots have shown that there are sorts that appeal equally to all three markets, and there are also sorts that consumers find unconvincing or hardly convincing. It was also shown that the quantity of confectionery consumed in Germany is lower than in Poland and Russia. Accordingly, hypothesis H2 can be accepted, because a country-specific processing of markets with similar income perceptions does not lead to higher demand.

4.3. Relations between an orientation on age clusters (generations) for confectionery products and consumer´s interest

The study by age group is intended to examine whether increased sales of confectionery can possibly be achieved in a more targeted manner, i.e., by dividing the target group into age groups. This is not just about the varieties that are preferred, but also about the circumstances of the respective age groups. Life circumstances and also the experiences of the years lead to other purchase intentions, so that advertising and also the taste should be adapted to precisely these. These differences have already been discussed in detail in the chapter on literature review. At this point, it is to be examined what the selected consumers on the German, Polish, and Russian confectionery market prefer, focusing on age. This background led to the hypothesis H3, stating that marketing for confectionery according to age groups would not result in higher demand.

4.3.1. Relations between selected types of confectionery products and demand according to generations

For hypothesis H2, different types of confectionaries were queried, whose answers were processed as a country comparison. To keep the survey comparable, these results were broken down by generational age groups. The results of the age distinction were as follows, beginning with figure no. 37. It presents a graphical visualization of the responses to the question “How much do you like pure chocolate?”.

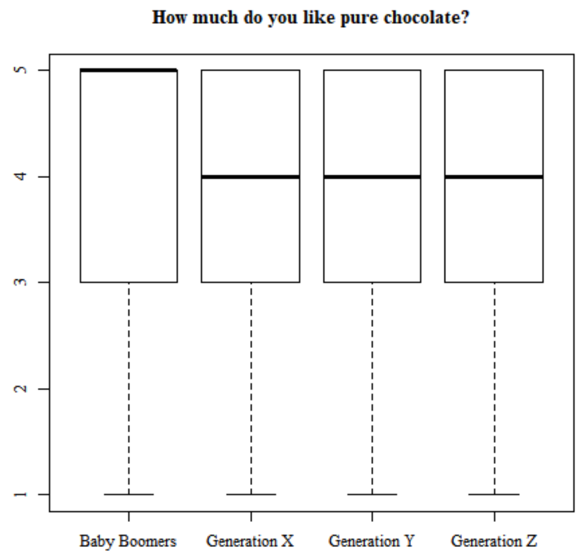


Figure 37. Responses to the question "How much do you like pure chocolate?", divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure no. 38 presents the results to the question "How much do you like filled chocolate", according to generations.

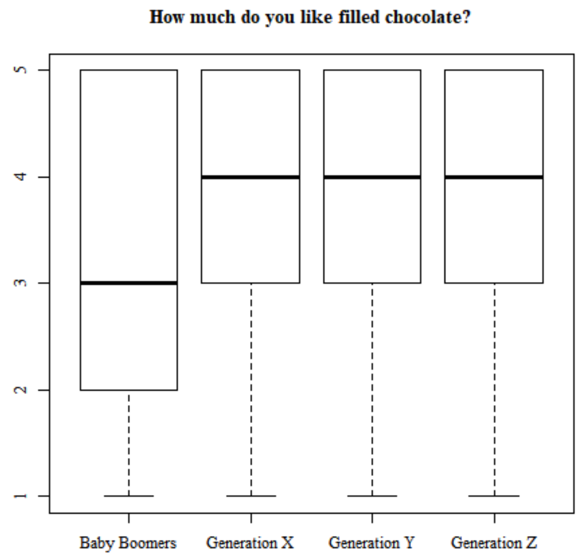


Figure 38. Responses to the question "How much do you like filled chocolate?", divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

For the generation of baby boomers, pure chocolate is most favored (see figure no. 37). All other age groups also showed a preference for both varieties, placing the median at 4 on the 5-point Likert scale. Analogous to the country-specific comparison, sales activities can be summarized for these generations. Analysis of variance has shown no significant difference (see table 13). For the purpose of completeness, the results for filled chocolate (see figure no. 38), waffles (see figure no. 39), pralines (see figure no. 40), candy (figure no. 41) and jellies/gummies (figure no. 42) are presented in the following section.

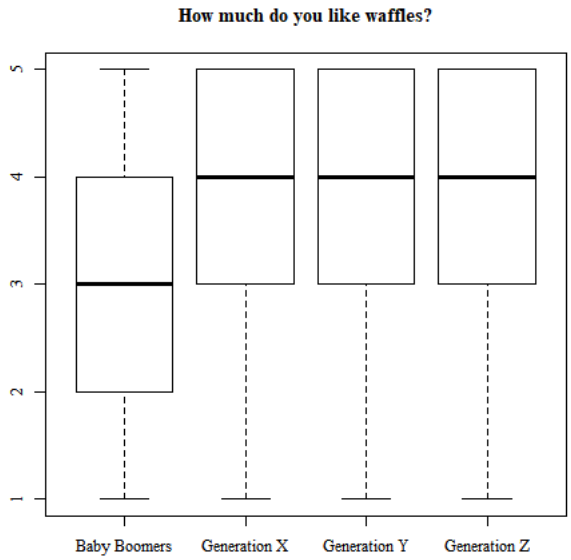


Figure 39. Responses to the question “How much do you like waffles?”, divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

A look on table no. 14, which presents the results of the calculations with regard to the waffles, shows, that there is a significant difference in generations. To be precise, it is between generation Y and the baby boomers (p-value = 0.002). When it comes to pralines, there is a significance observable between generation Z and X and between generation Z and Y (table no. 14). Figure 40 presents the responses to the question “How much do you like pralines?”, divided by age clusters.

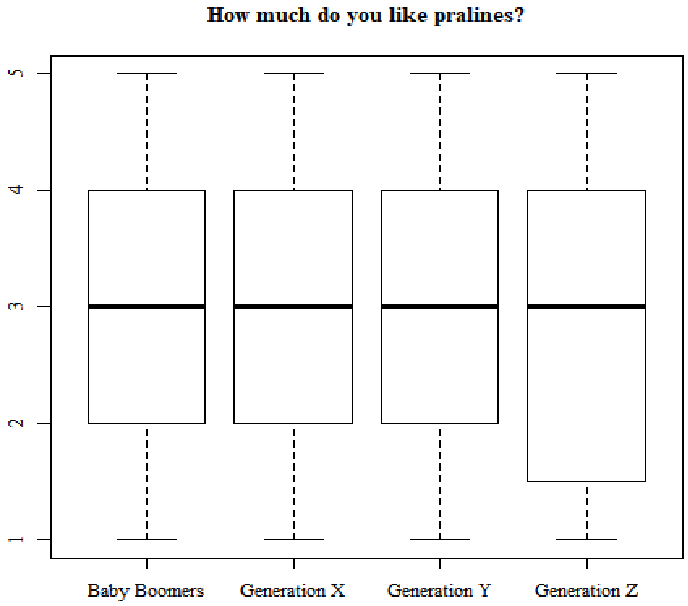


Figure 40. Responses to the question “How much do you like pralines?”, divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

The subdivision by age group also shows, analogously to the findings after the subdivision by country, that there is agreement that pralines are rated neutrally (figure no. 40). The picture is only slightly different for wafers (figure no. 39). Country-specifically, this type of confectionery was rated with a 4 on the 5-point Likert scale, whereby this result clearly goes in the direction of the classification "I love it". The preparation of the data by age appears analogous. With the exception of the generation of baby boomers, consumers are unanimous and rated this sort as a favorite. However, the gap of the baby boomers is not clearly different but only slightly. Baby boomers rated wafers a 3 on the scale, underscoring their neutral attitude toward this form of confectionery.

Figure no. 41 presents a box plot on the responses of the question “How much do you like candy?”.

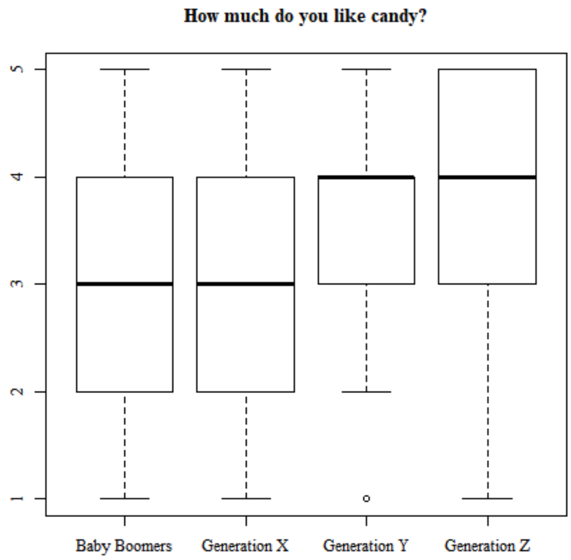


Figure 41. Responses to the question "How much do you like candy?", divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

In general, it should first be noted that sugar confectionery such as candy is less favored than chocolate confectionery. However, remaining at the level, candy was more favored country-specifically in the Russian market than it was in Germany or Poland. The now completed breakdown of the data by age group suggests that the Russian consumers who rated this confectionery with a 4, that it is predominantly younger market participants who like this type of confectionery (figure no. 41).

Figure no. 42 presents a box plot on the responses of the question "How much do you like jellies/gummies?".

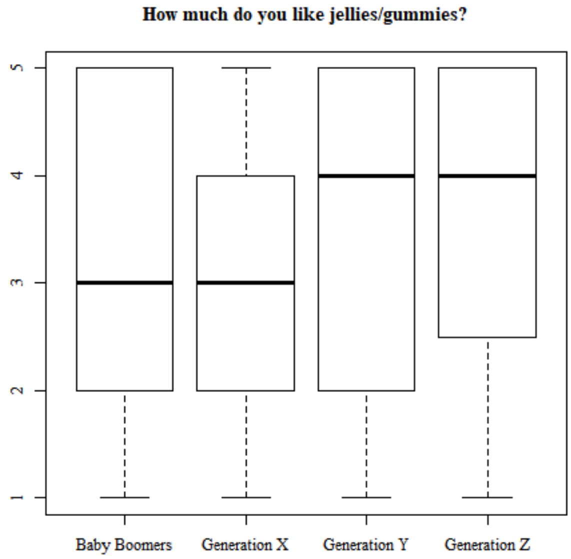


Figure 42. Responses to the question "How much do you like jellies/gummies?", divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

The trend for candy is also evident in the case of jellies/gummies. It is predominantly younger consumers who like jellies. However, the older respondents do not categorically reject this type. They expressed a rather restrained opinion on this and opted for a 3 on the 5-point Likert scale, classifying their preferences as rather neutral toward jellies/gummies (figure no. 42). Further, no significance for differences on the generations could be calculated (see table no. 15).

4.3.2. Relations between perception of disposable income and frequency of consumption

Confectionaries are integrated into our everyday lives, and various motives lead to buy confectionery. Basically, the prevailing opinion among the interviewees was that the financial situation was largely good or partially classified as "neither good nor bad". The differentiation according to age does not lead to any other findings by itself, however, the perception in the different age groups is worth mentioning.

Figure no. 43 visualizes the results. Generation Z feels that its financial situation is "neither good nor bad," even though all three country results are combined here. The bottom line is that the youngest respondents are in a better position than today's baby boomers were in their younger days. It is also astonishing that most of those surveyed who belong to generation Y consider their everyday financial life to be "good" for the most part. It is also pleasing to note that the majority of baby boomers also classify their current financial situation as good. Generation X, on the other hand, is divided. The results fell equally between "neither good nor bad" and "good".

Finally, there remains the view in the direction of frequency of consumption, which results are shown in figure no. 43.

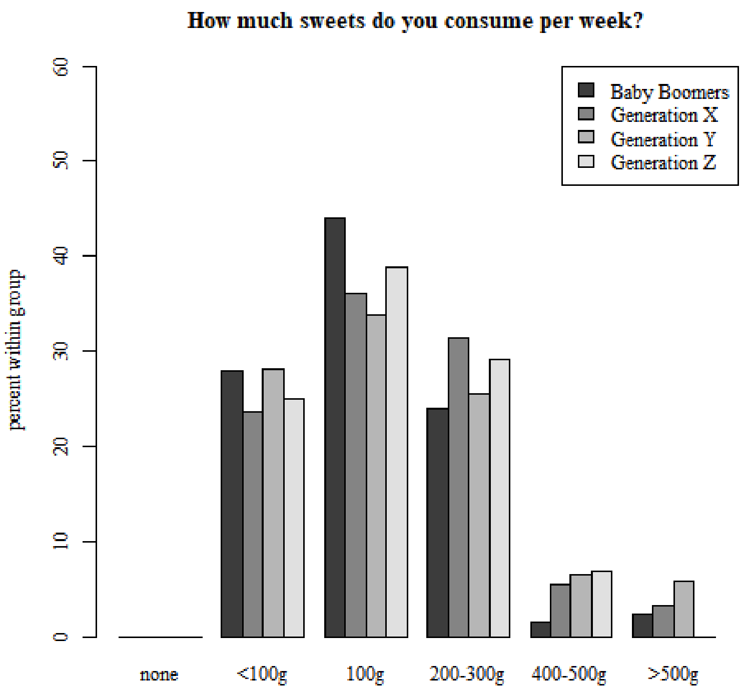


Figure 43. Responses to the question "How much sweets do you consume per week?", divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

From previous analysis of this variable within this study, the majority of German respondents showed an average consumption of about 100g of confectionery per week, with a tendency towards <100g. The breakdown by age reveals that it was predominantly the older participants who were of this opinion (figure no. 43). The frequency of consumption among generation X is more broadly distributed, with the tendent going more towards 100g and 200-300g per week. For generation Y, this insight also applies. Generation Z has also been willing to admit that their consumption frequency can go in the direction of 400-500g per week, but only a relatively small proportion disclosed this. Most participants from generation Z, on the other hand, classify their confectionery consumption at around 100g per week, some answers were also found in the 400-500g category, although no participant from this group consumes more than 500g of confectionery per week.

4.3.3. Relations between consumption of confectionery and other determinants

Regarding the literature review on marketing strategies (Balick et al., 2016; de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Shoham, 2015; Wind et al., 1973; Wright, 1975), the purpose of a purchase, among other things, was taken into account. Here, the reader found indications that age-appropriate market cultivation was purposeful. In the sense of defining target groups, it is essential to clarify who the product is aimed at before launching a product. It was also underlined that different age groups should be approached in different ways. The question of whether this also leads to increased success with confectionery was addressed via the following points in the survey. Participants should first give an answer to the question for whom do they buy sweets? Figure no. 44 provides an indication.

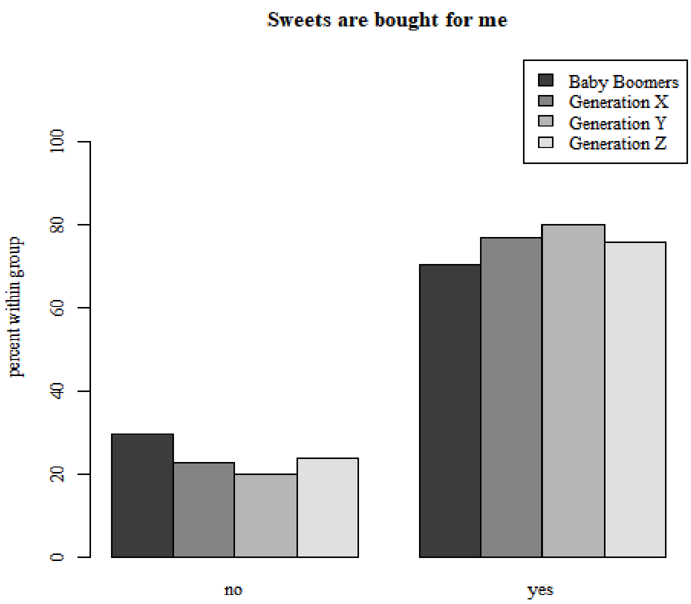


Figure 44. Responses to the statement "Sweets are bought for me", divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

The aim is to find out which intention plays a role when the consumer decides in favor of confectionery and which differences but also commonalities are equally recognizable on the basis of the age structures of the respondents. Based on figure no. 44, the first thing to note is that most of the feedback suggests that confectionery is primarily purchased for oneself. In the further course, it was asked what other motives there are for buying. Responses are graphically summarized on figure no. 45.

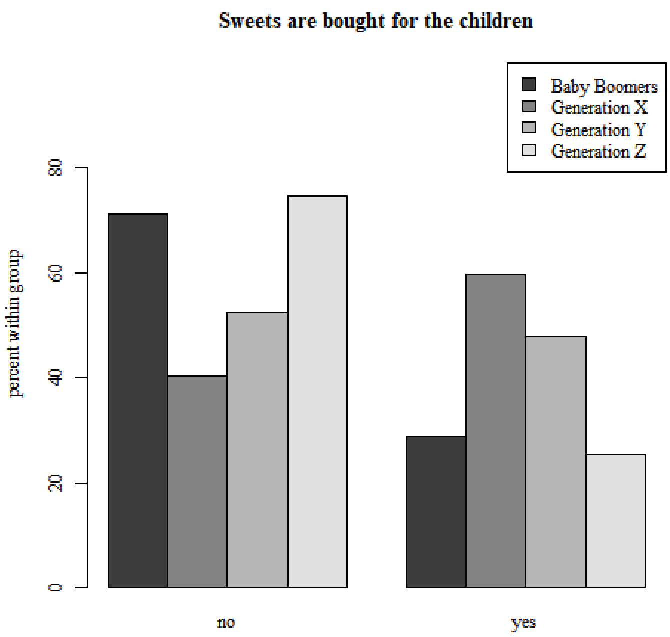


Figure 45. Responses to the statement "Sweets are bought for the children", divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

One or two of today's baby boomers might also already be a grandparent, and one might suspect they are buying sweets for their grandchildren. However, figure no. 45 shows that most baby boomers tend not to buy sweets for children. About 60% of generation X, on the other hand, do indeed buy sweets for the little ones, and generation Y's responses are equally divided between the two answer choices. The majority of the youngest participants in the survey stated that they do not buy sweets for children. Here, it could be assumed that one of the reasons might be that they may not yet have any children of their own, so the question was deliberately posed to be about children in a general sense. These can be nieces, nephews, but also children of friends and acquaintances. Nevertheless, it is clear that this generation does not buy sweets for others (see figure no. 44).

Hypothesis H3 states that age-specific market cultivation does not lead to increased sales. The survey therefore looked at the habits of market participants of different ages, and here, too, it was necessary to examine whether commonalities could be combined to form a sales strategy so that the sales efforts of confectionery manufacturers could be more targeted than restricting them to age alone. At this point, it should be noted that there are more aspects to be considered in the context of sales, than age. The principles of these actions were discussed in the first chapter.

Figure no. 46 presents the responses to the question “How often do you usually eat sweets while recreation / relaxing?”.

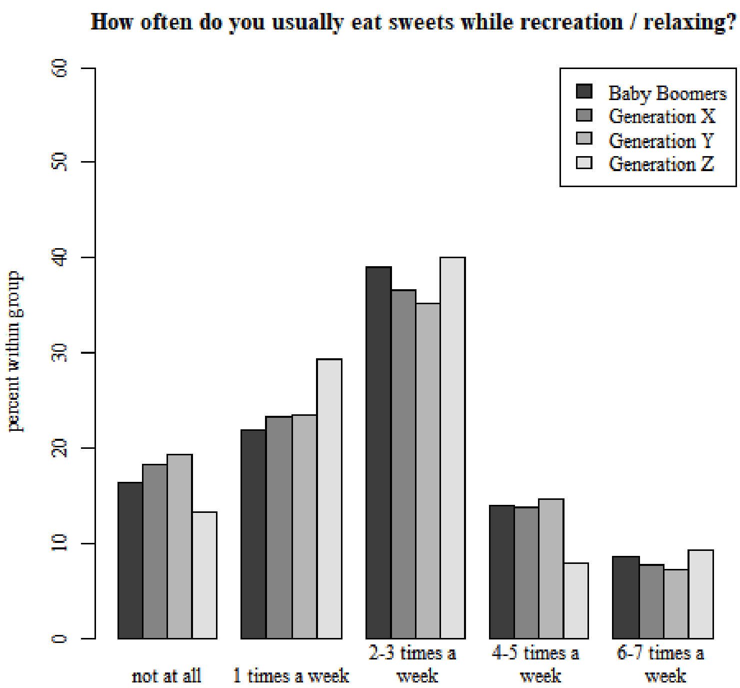


Figure 46. Responses to the question “How often do you usually eat sweets while recreation / relaxing?”, divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

From figure no. 46 it can be observed that the majority of responses indicate that participants reach for sweets 2-3 times per week during recovery periods. Among the responses, it can also be noted that the next largest proportion of the youngest survey participants indicated consumption of once a week, during recreation time. Other eating habits of confectionery were queried and were intended to provide information on how the same habits affect confectionery consumption. Responses to the question “How often sweets are eaten in the morning as a small breakfast?” are presented on figure no. 47.

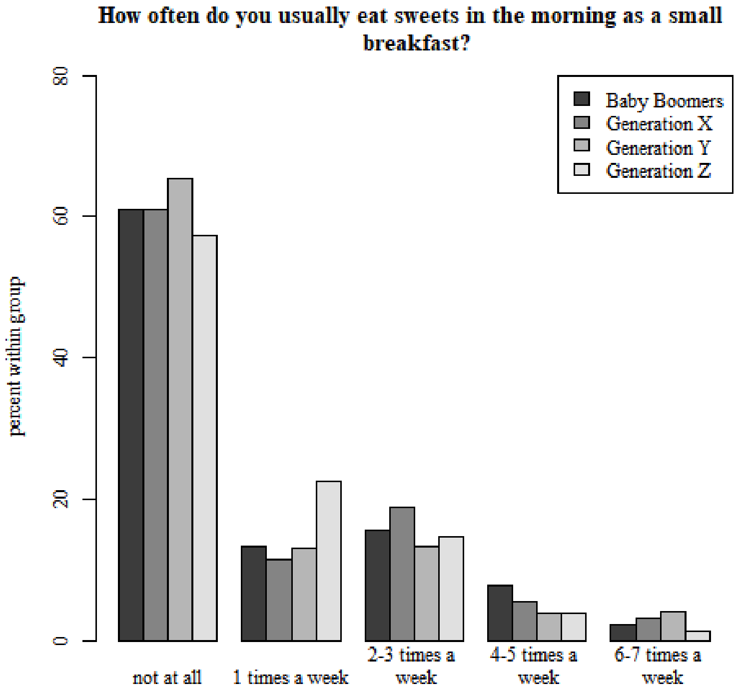


Figure 47. Responses to the question “How often do you usually eat sweets in the morning as a small breakfast?”, divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure no. 47 presents the answers to the question “How often do you usually eat sweets in the morning as a small breakfast?”. In the following it is explained, why this specific question was asked. A brief excursion is permitted in this regard. In 1983, the Knoppers product was invented by August Storck KG. The advertising slogan "Knoppers, the little breakfast" was created in the same year. In the accompanying commercial, the slogan was: "Every morning at half past nine in Germany..." and was intended to suggest that this product could be used as a breakfast substitute. Children were shown packing the product in the morning and consuming it in time for the big break at 9:30 a.m. (which actually takes place at this time in Germany). This campaign was continued into 2010 and only then changed to "Knoppers – and everything is inside". A look at the available survey results on figure no. 47 show one possible reason for this change. The majority does not want to turn to confectionery in order to replace breakfast (“https://www.knoppers.de,” n.d.).

In the further course, the following motivations for buying sweets were also examined: sweets as a reward (see figure no. 48), sweets “for no reason, in between” (see figure no. 49), as a dessert after lunch (figure no. 50) and as a tiny snack (figure no. 51). The results are presented in this same order.

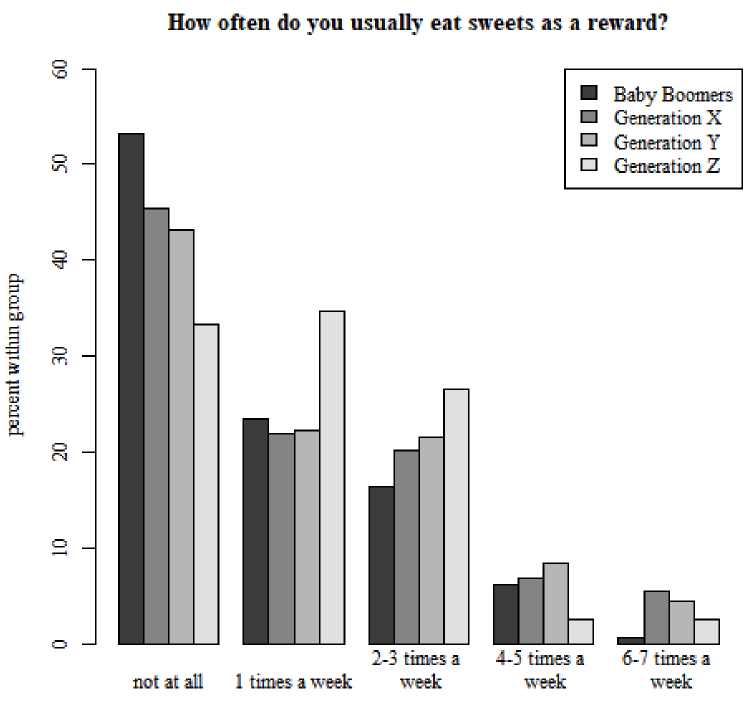


Figure 48. Responses to the question “How often do you usually eat sweets as a reward?” divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

Generation Z provides information that there is a distribution in thirds (see figure no. 48). One third of the answers said "not at all", another third "once a week" and the last third said they reward themselves with sweets 2-3 times a week. The majority of the other age groups clearly fell on the answer "not at all".

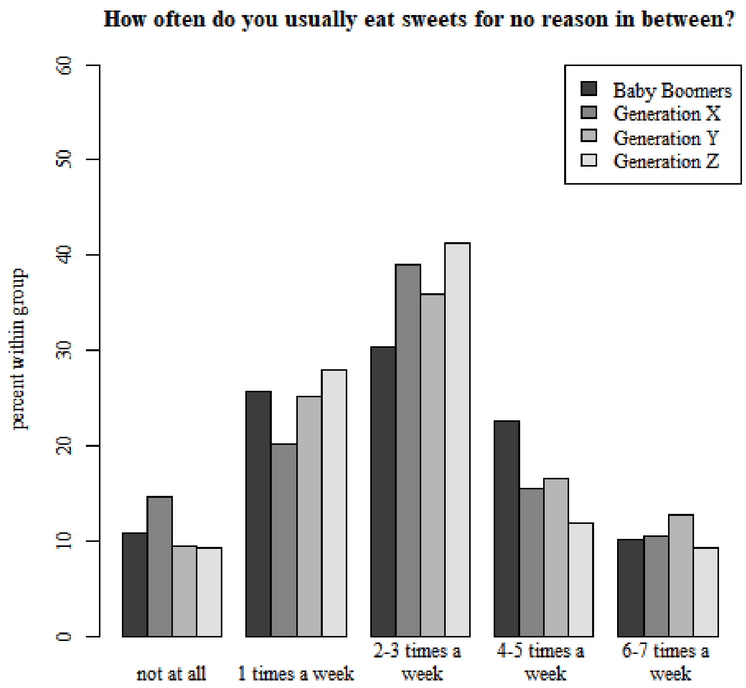


Figure 49. Responses to the question “How often do you usually eat sweets for no reason in between?” divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

Except for the baby boomers, most of the responses are found in the middle range. 2-3 times a week people simply snack in between. Interestingly, the majority of the answers from baby boomers range from once a week to 4-5 times a week.

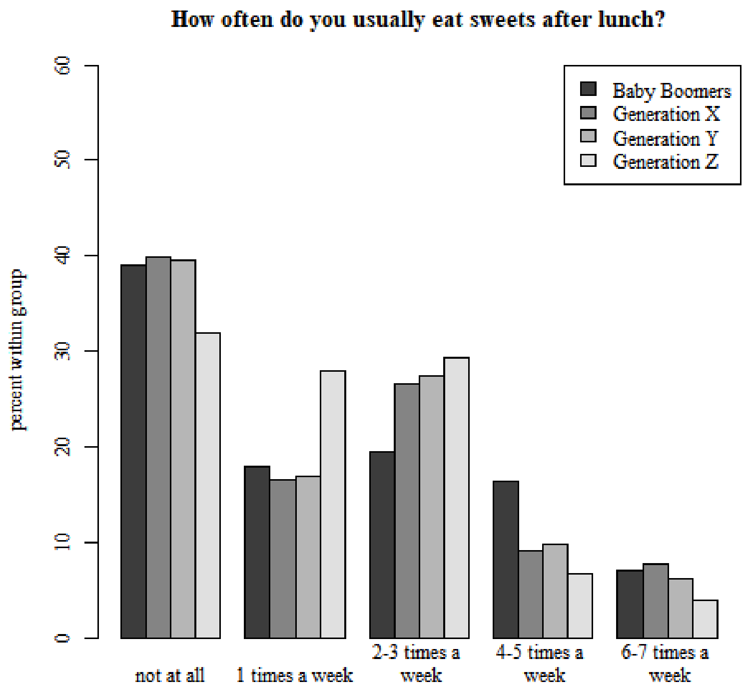


Figure 50. Responses to the question "How often do you usually eat sweets after lunch?" divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

Admittedly, at first glance it can be stated that the majority does not eat dessert in the form of sweets. A more detailed look at generation Z reveals that the responses also show a notable number at "once a week" and also give their vote to the answer option "2-3 times a week". It is therefore not entirely unusual to consume sweets as a dessert. The second highest number of responses from generations X and Y shows a leap from "not at all" to "2-3 times a week"-consumption. The majority of baby boomers, on the other hand, underline the first impression and tend predominantly not to consume sweets after lunch.

Figure no. 51 presents a summarized view on the responses to the question "How often do you usually eat sweets as a tiny snack?".

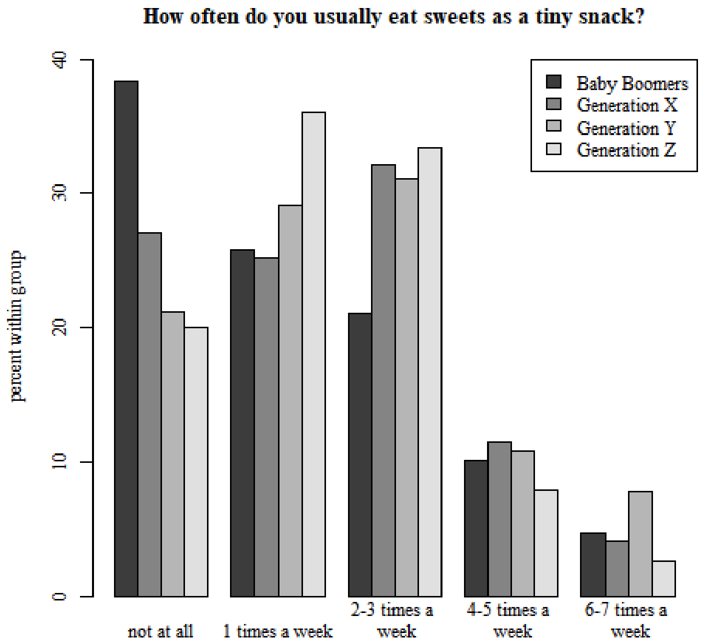


Figure 51. Responses to the question "How often do you usually eat sweets as a tiny snack?", divided by age clusters

Source: Own elaboration.

The presented graphical uphill and downhill journey on figure no. 51 reveals the following insights:

Baby Boomers: Every possible answer option was chosen. Most said that confectionery is not consumed as a snack at all. However, the answer option "once a week" ranked second in the feedback ranking and the option "2-3 times a week" ranked third.

Generation X: Most answers are found at the option "2-3 times per week", after that "not at all" and on the third place "once per week".

Generations Y & Z: A so-called "neck-and-neck race" between "once a week" and "2-3 times a week".

4.3.4. Summary

The results of the preferences studied at the beginning are first summarized in the following figure no. 52.

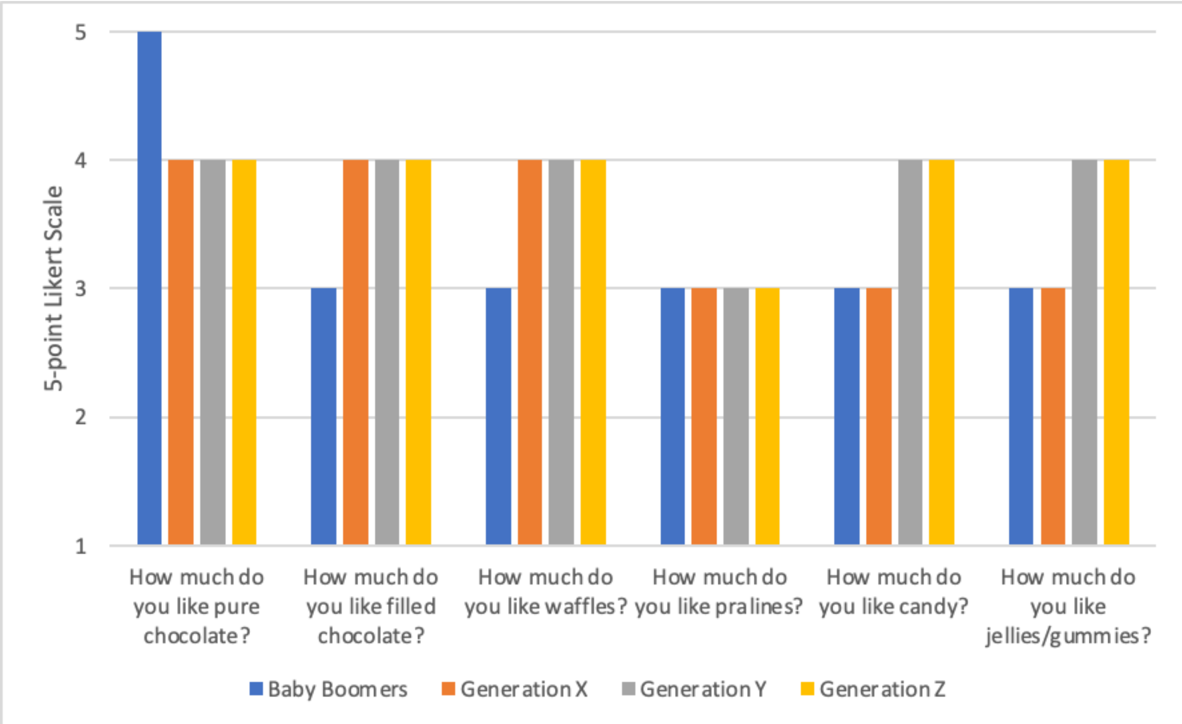


Figure 52. Graphical summary of results regarding variety preference, divided by age groups

Source: Own elaboration.

The figure 52 shows where joint market development in the sense of new product launches could be possible. Pure chocolate is favored by all age groups, followed by filled chocolates and wafers. A common feature in the case of chocolates suggests that they do not merit any further efforts on the part of sales, as they were consistently rated as neutral. Here, statistically, a "nice to have" attitude prevails rather than a "must have". With regard to candy and jellies, it is actually worth investing in an age-optimized marketing campaign, because the younger market participants from the selected markets very much favor these varieties and express this on the 4 of the Likert scale. Nevertheless, the results were scattered and did not show a consistent result all throughout when it comes to the investigation by age group. Therefore, additional determinants were included for the investigation of hypothesis 3.

With regard to the queried habits concerning confectionery, the survey revealed the following picture in summary (see table no. 16).

Table 16 Tabular summary of confectionery eating habits, broken down by age groups

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
How often do you usually eat sweets while recreation/relaxing?	2-3 times a week	2-3 times a week	2-3 times a week	2-3 times a week
How often do you usually eat sweets in the morning as a small breakfast?	not at all	not at all	not at all	not at all
How often do you usually eat sweets as a reward?	not at all	not at all	not at all	1 times a week
How often do you usually eat sweets for no reason in between?	2-3 times a week	2-3 times a week	2-3 times a week	2-3 times a week
How often do you usually eat sweets after lunch?	not at all	not at all	not at all	not at all
How often do you usually eat sweets as a tiny snack?	not at all	2-3 times a week	2-3 times a week	1 times a week

Source: Own elaboration

From the above results presented in table no. 16, it can be deduced that it might be worthwhile to develop marketing efforts targeting leisure and in-between snacks, as these were the most common consumption situations across all age groups. If promotional materials are targeted for consumption in the morning or after lunch, these efforts in the confectionery sector would be less likely to encourage people to buy them, as consumption tends not to occur during these times. The match in the "small snack" area rounds off the picture for the leisure and gratuitous snacking area.

4.4. A packaging variety that may lead to cognitive dissonance

The phenomenon of cognitive dissonance has already been briefly mentioned in the introduction. Also, that it was Leon Festinger who published this theory in 1957. Following this very approach, the present study attempted to investigate the extent to which the diverse range of confectionery products, combined with the equally large variety of packaging, reaches the consumer. Cognitive dissonance occurs when there is a discrepancy between the expectation of something or someone and reality. Overcoming or at least reducing this imbalance would therefore be in the best interest of the decision maker. The controversy between the motives of the confectionery industry and the purchase intentions of the consumers could also be seen in this present study. In the following, particular attributes of packaging are investigated and the results are consistent with the findings on cognitive dissonance of other researchers (Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2007; S. Z. John & Nair, 2017; Morvan & O'Connor, 2017).

Furthermore, literature review has revealed a lack of knowledge about the impact of the range of packaging designs within the confectionery sector (Balick et al., 2016; Muratova et al., 2021). However, from other industries research has already provided interesting and applicable findings in this area. To narrow this gap, this survey attempted to investigate the influence of the following attributes of packaging designs on the buying decision: Protection of the product, high-quality packaging, visibility of the brand. In the due course aspects of personnel attitude towards diversity was investigated.

The federal association of the German confectionery industry (BDSI) provides an impression of the functions that packaging for confectionery, ice cream and snacks must fulfill ("Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie e.V.," n.d.):

- protection form germs, oxygen, light and moisture,
- hygiene,
- quality and durability,
- communication about product.

This is the result of the view from the industry, combined with legal constraints. However, legal requirements are not part of the research questions and therefore neglected within the analysis. Rather, it is a question of how the consumer perceives the variety of packaging and whether the consumer can be influenced by it in the purchase decision. In the following, the results of the survey with regard to the attributes of a packaging are presented.

4.4.1. Protection against foreign body entry

Keeping in mind that confectionery largely consists of rather few, but well selected ingredients and is usually mixed together in different variations, then, for the consumer, the packaging is the primary distinguishing feature. It can also be seen from the marketing strategies that "individuality" or generally a unique selling proposition is primarily generated via the packaging, respectively through the external appearance of a product. A plain chocolate bar, for example, consists besides cocoa and sugar, only of a few additional raw materials. Diversity is achieved by adding special raw materials such as nuts or flavors. Every imaginable combination is possible to create a new, different taste experience with just a few ingredients for confectionery goods.

The survey showed that packaging with regard to the protection of a product is of particular interest within the selected countries (figure no. 53) and this picture is accompanied by the view from all age groups (figure no. 54):

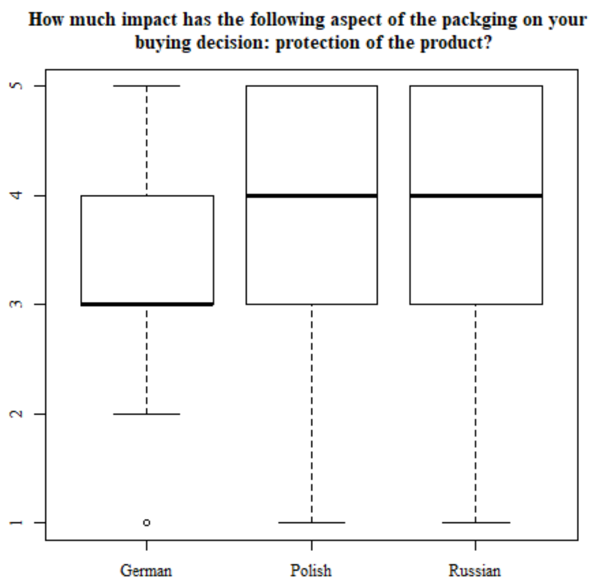


Figure 53. Responses to the question "How much impact has the following aspect of the packaging on your buying decision. Protection of the product?", divided by country

Source: Own elaboration.

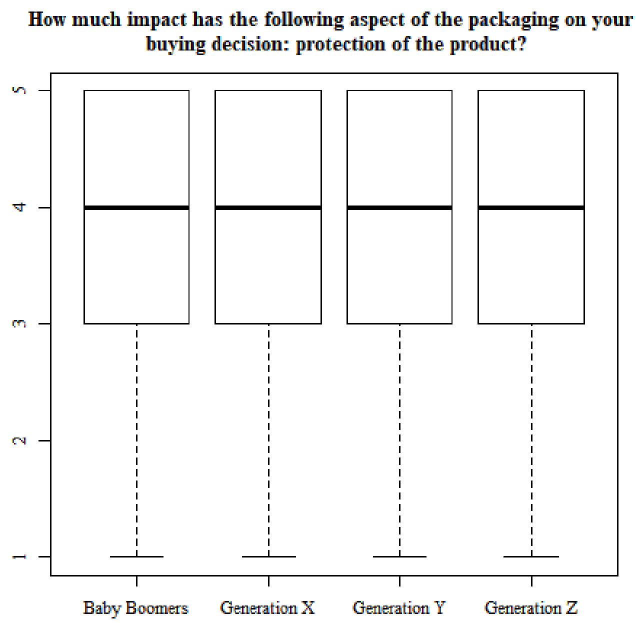


Figure 54. Responses to the question "How much impact has the following aspect of the packaging on your buying decision. Protection of the product?", divided by age

Source: Own elaboration.

A more detailed view on the breakdown by countries, as presented on figure no. 53, shows that the German consumer is rather neutral when it comes to the protection of the product through the packaging. For Polish and Russian consumers, the importance of the protection plays a bigger role. Reasons might be that on these markets law regulations are not as strict as in Germany and this raises more concerns on the consumers' side. Hence, a closed and secure packaging tends to give the feeling of security and is rated accordingly high in the purchase decision.

4.4.2. Insights on the quality of the packaging

Another aspect queried was the quality of the packaging. This attribute may suggest that the product within also may be of high quality. Looking at the feedback, it can be seen that the German consumer does not confirm this. Whereas the Polish and Russian consumers are even more interested in the quality of the packaging before buying a product (see figure no. 55).

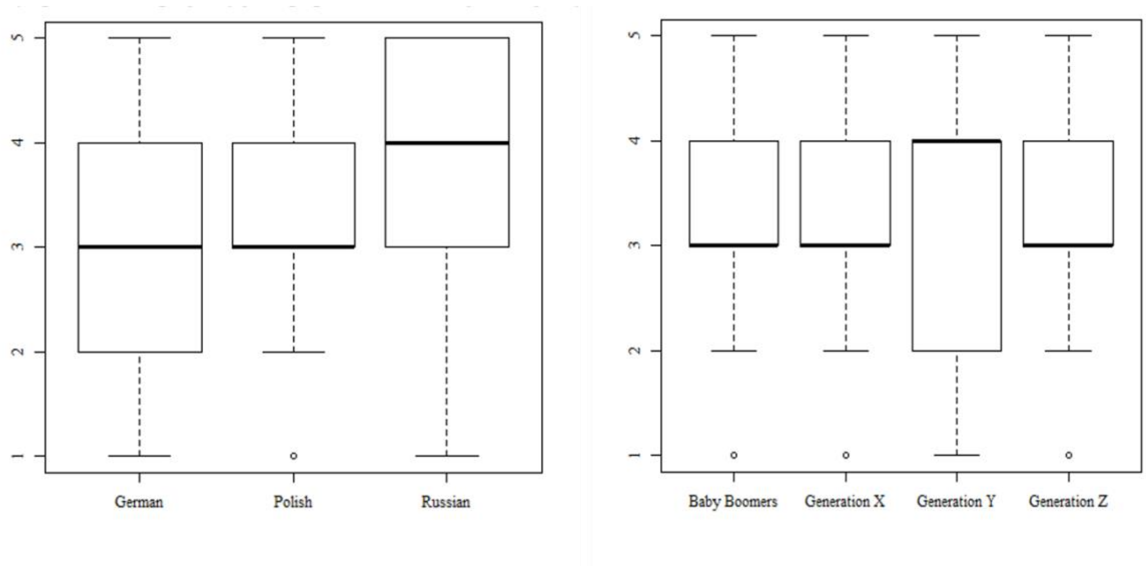


Figure 55. Responses to the question "How much impact has the following aspect of the packaging on your buying decision: a high-quality packaging as an indicator of product quality", divided by country and by age

Source: Own elaboration.

A predominantly neutral attitude is discernible, when looking at figure no. 55. It is worth mentioning, however, that it is the younger (but not the youngest) participants from generation Y who find that good quality packaging indicates good product quality. For these market participants, it is worthwhile if a company that produces confectionery invests more money in packaging quality. For the majority, however, this attribute has little effect on the purchase decision.

4.4.3. Insights on visibility of the brand

Staying with the consideration of packaging, the survey was centered on how this relates to the visibility of the brand. Literature states that brand imprinting and the connection between the consumer and a brand could lead to more sales. How important are these attributes when it comes to confectionery?

At first, figure no. 56 presents a subdivision by age, indicating that younger people (generations Y and Z) are not as influenced by the visibility of a brand than older participants do (baby boomers and generation X).

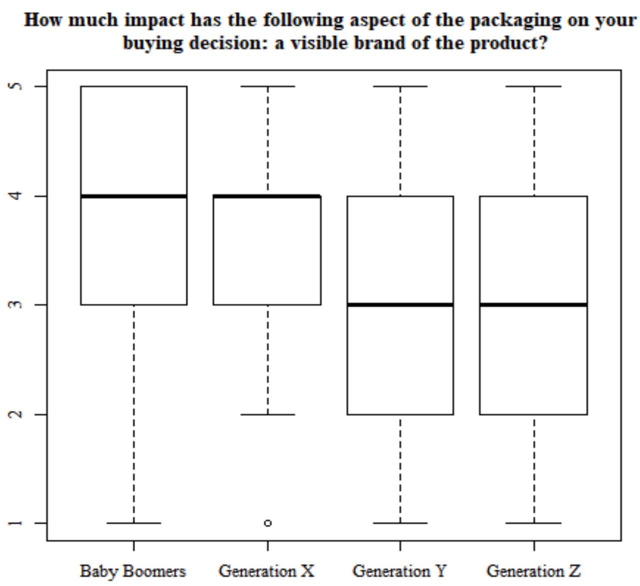


Figure 56. Responses to the question "How much impact has the following aspect of the packaging on your buying decision: a visible brand of the product?", divided by age

Source: Own elaboration.

When it comes to a division of the participants into their respective markets, they participate in, it can be concluded that brand visibility plays a greater role for Polish and Russian consumers than for German consumers (see figure no. 57).

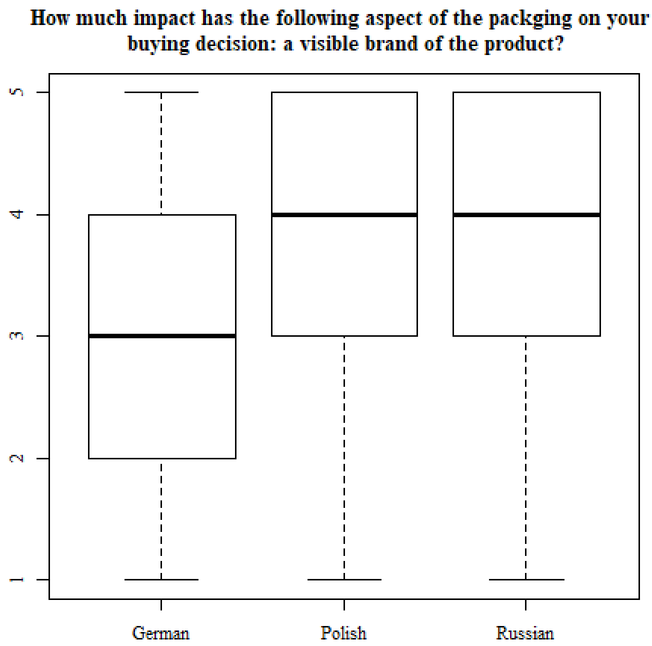


Figure 57. Responses to the question "How much impact has the following aspect of the packaging on your buying decision: a visible brand of the product?", divided by country

Source: Own elaboration.

4.4.4. Insights on the design variety offered on the confectionery market

The simplest way to make the manufactured products more individual and to distinguish them from other products (e.g., depending on the preference of the target group) is, in addition to the added raw materials, the packaging. In the industry, attempts are made to increase sales in this way and thus to successfully increase turnover. This in turn leads to the fact that several packaging machines are used at one production line in order to meet the workload and the desired diversity. At least this is the view on the supply side. If a look at demand is taken, however, it is found that it is not only the variety of packaging that matters. In the case of confectionery, this is not explicitly desired (see figure no. 58). Participants of the survey were asked to rank their opinion on a 5-point Likert-scale, where 1 was equal to the statement "I do not agree at all” and 5 was equal to “I totally agree”, with the middle 3, declaring a neutral answer.

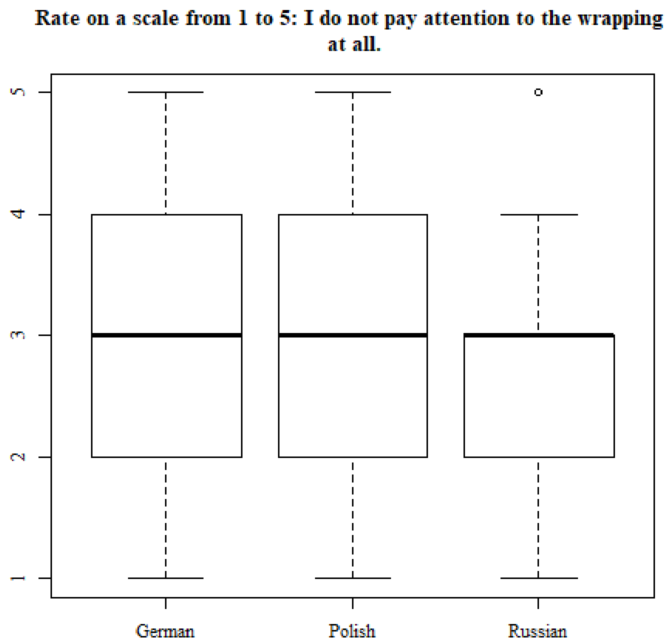


Figure 58. Responses to the question “Rate on a scale from 1 to 5: I do not pay attention to the wrapping at all.”, divided by country

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure no. 58, presents the view by country, and shows a neutral attitude towards packaging. It could be argued that the packaging wishes and also their design are directed more at younger consumers who, in times of Instagram, filter use, and similar media, are used to a quick and frequent change from the external design. Figure no. 59 displays a nearly similar picture for all age groups.

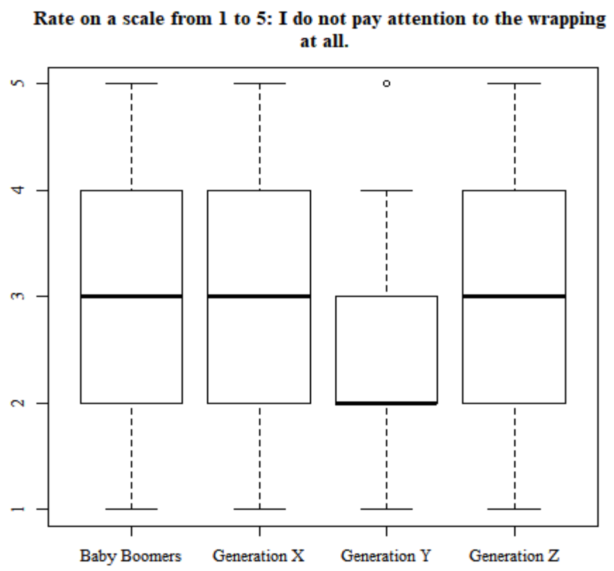


Figure 59. Responses to the question “Rate on a scale from 1 to 5: I do not pay attention to the wrapping at all.”, divided by age

Source: Own elaboration.

In summary, for the majority of respondents, have a neutral attitude towards wrapping in general. Only participants belonging to generation Y stated that the wrapping in fact is of attention. The following illustrations, from figure no. 60, shows that the consumer wants to recognize "his/her" chocolate.

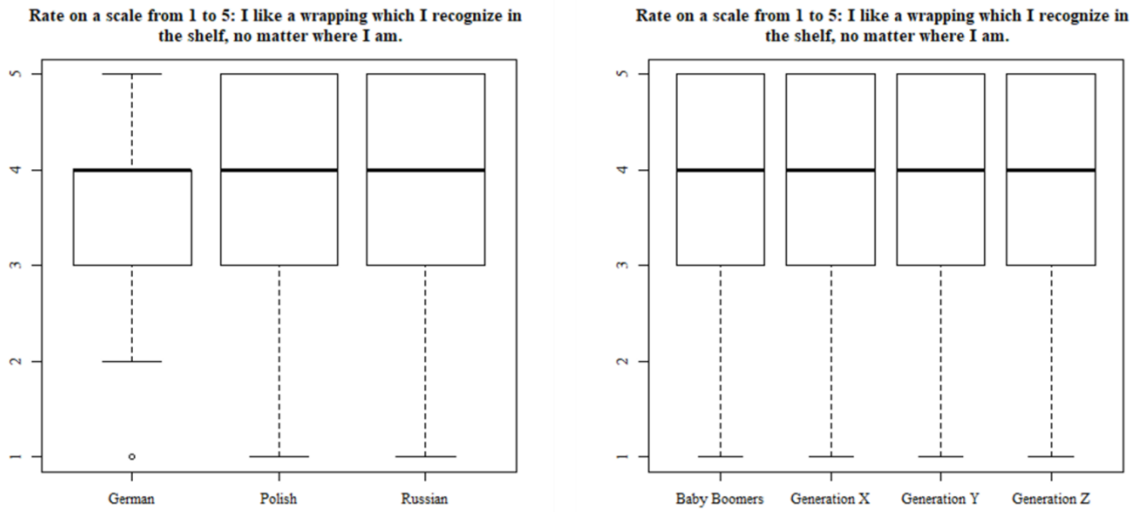


Figure 60. Responses to the question "Rate on a scale from 1 to 5: I like a wrapping which I recognize in the shelf, no matter where I am.", divided by country and by age

Source: Own elaboration.

In the questionnaire, the question was asked again in a different way and the result presented on figure no. 61, shows that the consumers asked do not want frequent packaging changes. The consumer wants to recognize what he likes and does not want to be surprised with a new appearance. Hence, frequent design changes of the packaging are not well received.

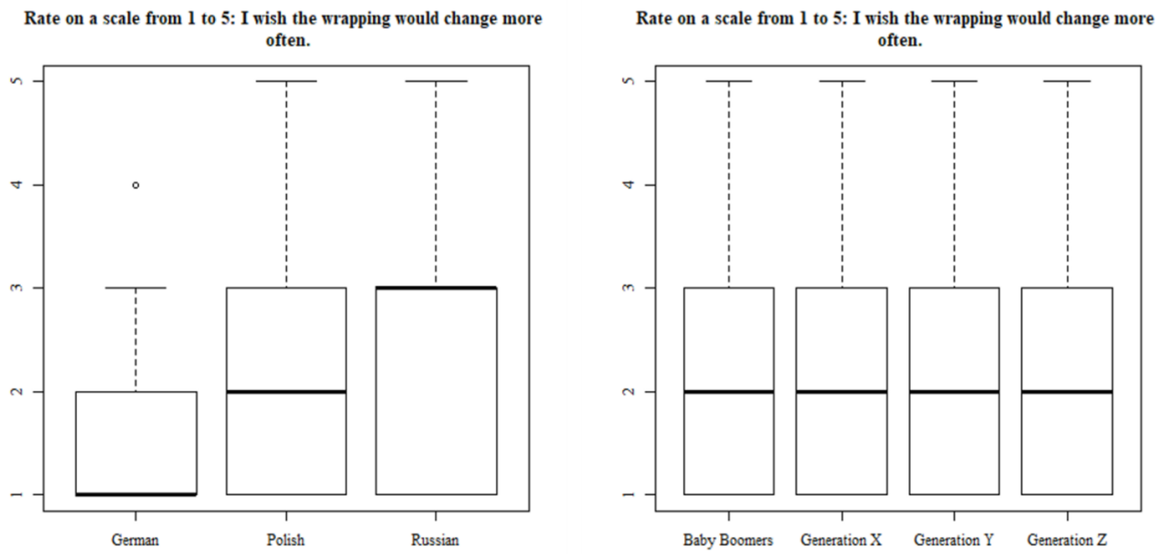


Figure 61. Responses to the question "Rate on a scale from 1 to 5: I wish the wrapping would change more often.", divided by country and by age

Source: Own elaboration.

The situation is very similar with regard to variety. Here, too, the consumer likes "her/his" confectionery the most. In some places, however, hardly any difference can be detected, and this in turn soon leads the consumer into a dilemma (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Tang et al., 2017). Participants of the survey agreed on this statement which is presented on figure no. 62.

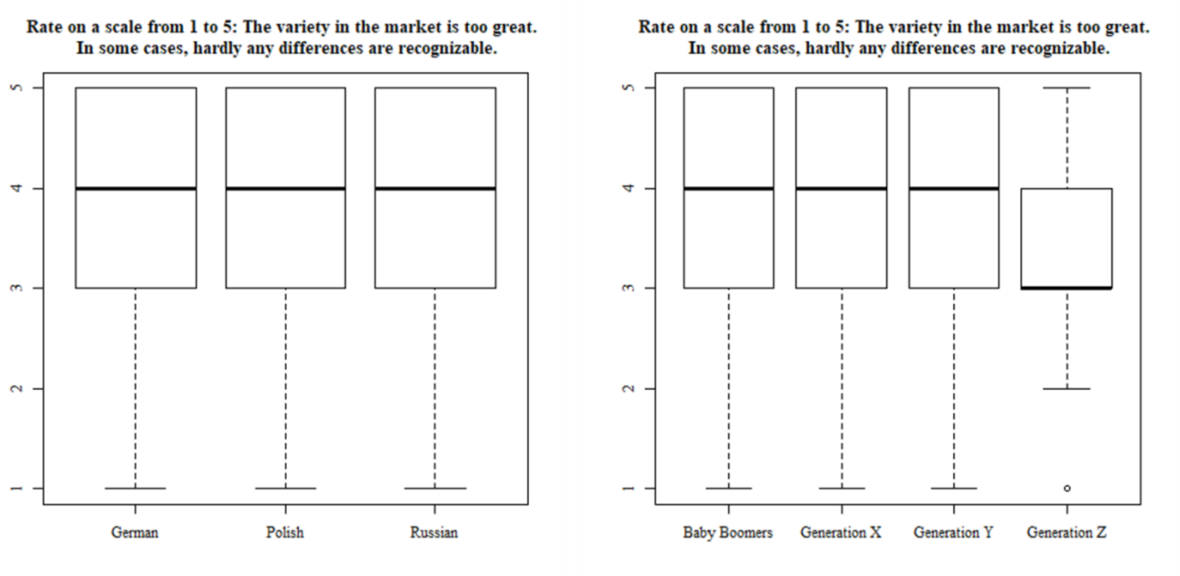


Figure 62. “Rate on a scale from 1 to 5: The variety in the market is too great. In some cases, hardly any differences are recognizable.” (Breakdown by country and by age)

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure no. 62 shows that the consumers surveyed agree that the prevailing variety hardly allows any differences to be identified. However, when asked whether the variety should be expanded further, the following picture arose and is presented on figure no. 63.

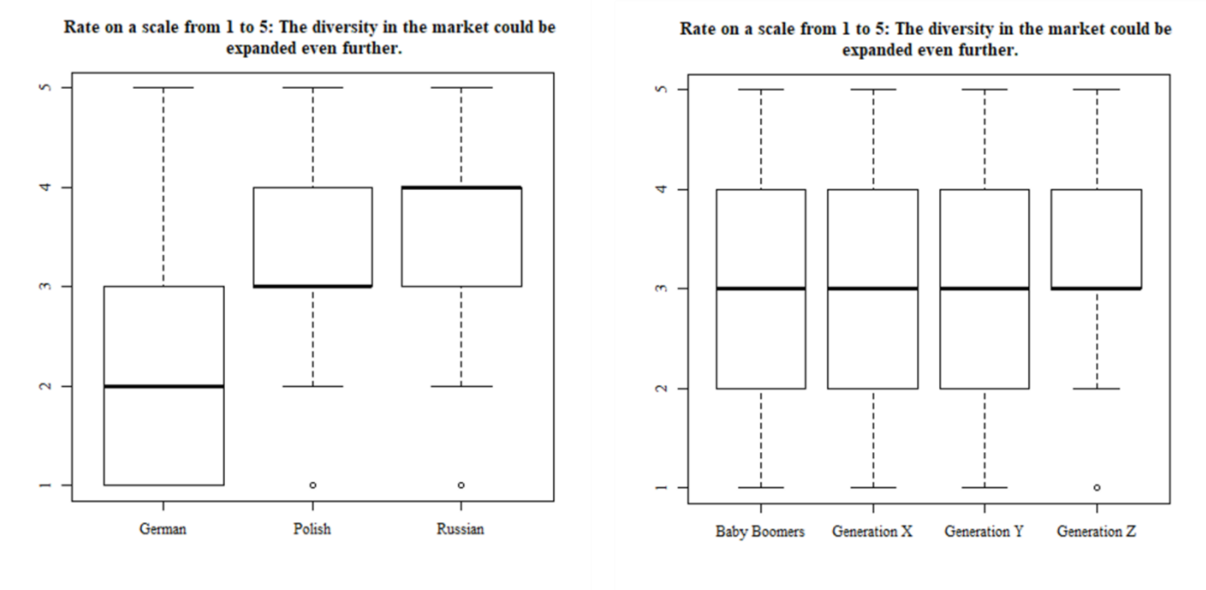


Figure 63. Responses to the question "Rate on a scale from 1 to 5: The diversity in the market could be expanded even further.", divided by country and by age

Source: Own elaboration.

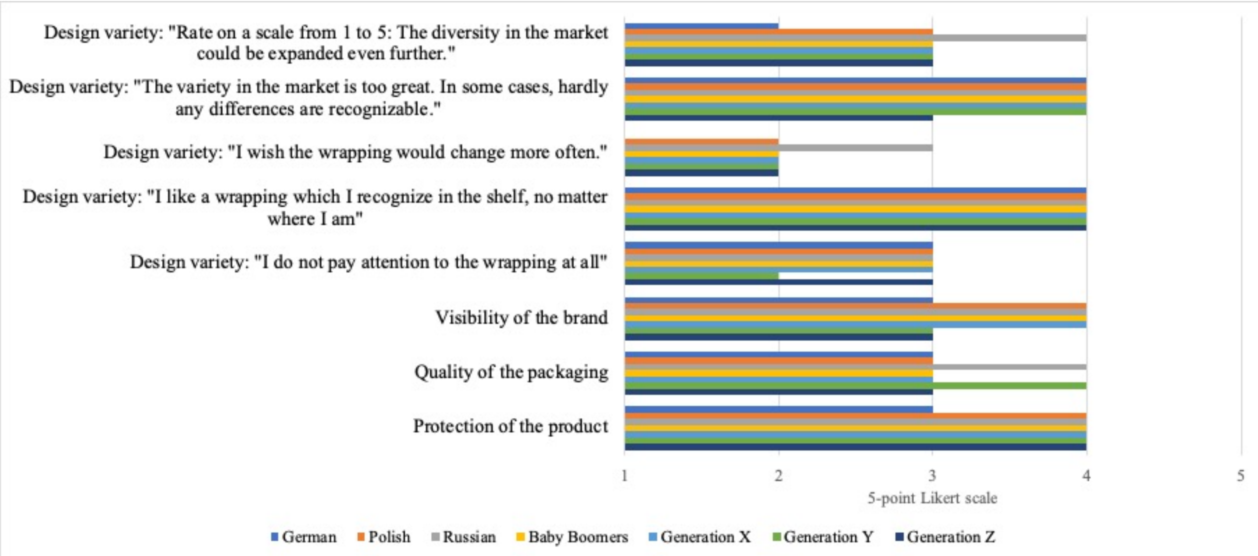
According to the results displayed on figure no. 63, there is definitely no desire for a higher variety diversity in Germany. For Russia, the response behavior is a bit inconsistent.

What cannot be neatly investigated by a questionnaire is the connection between variety diversity and purchase decision. Since this involves unconscious buying behavior, such a question can only be investigated by proper experiments in the supermarket. This would involve testing whether customers buy more or less when the range is increased or reduced. Such elaborate experiments are very complex. Literature review already underlined that increasing the offer leads to fewer purchases (Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009; Schwartz, 2005, 2016). From the literature, reference was made to studies that show a negative correlation between too much variety and actual purchasing behavior. In addition, the study at hand also shows that a large proportion of people really do want less variety (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000).

4.4.5. Summary on the insights regarding packaging variety

Focus of the subchapter 4.4. was on the results of the survey with regard to the hypothesis that consumers feel cognitive dissonance when being confronted with a wide packaging variety. The responses are summarized and the results are shown in the table no. 17.

Table 17 Tabular summary of the survey results regarding the variety of packaging on the confectionery market.



Source: Own elaboration

For the above summary, presented in table no. 17, the median was taken as the reference in each case. This shows that it is basically important that the product is protected from foreign bodies or other external influences. As far as the quality of the packaging is concerned, the majority does not consider this to be a clear purchase criterion. Whereas the Russian participants, who belong to generation Z, are thoroughly interested in the quality and they therefore selected an average of 4 on the 5-point Likert scale. By the same token, however, this also means that although manufacturers should choose a solid quality for the packaging of their products, this does not automatically signal to the consumer that the contents are also of high quality.

Visibility of the brand plays a role for older, Polish and Russian consumers. For German confectionery eaters, this plays a rather subordinate role. Manufacturing firms that implement this accordingly would be well advised.

The variety of packaging makes consumers uncertain in their purchasing decisions, which might lead to cognitive dissonance. The present study investigated attitudes on this subject. It was found that people like to recognize their favorite confectionery and would therefore tend not to change the packaging if asked. In the case of recognizability and the packaging itself, the respondents agree that this does not have to change. Even the question of whether the variety should be expanded further led to the result that this does not meet with enthusiasm (see figure no. 63). Consumers' statements regarding a broad variety reveal a conservative attitude towards this oversupply. This means no less than that cognitive dissonance can be the result, while the consumer has to decide for or against a product in the face of a broad assortment. It also became apparent that when it comes to confectionery, the taste is the initial product attribute in the purchase decision process.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Considerations of the major findings

This paper was written from a micro perspective by and large and aimed to investigate what motivates consumers to purchase confectionery. In addition, the work aimed to identify possible synergies that could result in an optimized production and consequently a consumer-oriented offer. The approach was twofold: an investigation by country groups; and the investigation by age groups. Similarities and differences were equally worked out to meet the objectives of the research questions. In the following, the findings are classified from an academic point of view and, in combination, shall allow an outlook on what a synchronized marketing approach could look like.

Following the order of the research questions posed, and the associated hypotheses, the results were classified into the scientific findings from the included literature.

The first research question was directed to the role of sustainability and thus connected to the first hypothesis:

RQ 1 What motivates consumers to buy confectionery items, with regard to sustainability concept?

H 1 Sustainable production of confectionery goods leads to increased consumption.

It was assumed that a sustainable production method leads to more consumption and thus to more sales, as it was detected for other food segments (Grzybowska-Brzezinska, Grzywinska-Rapca, Zuchowski, & Bórawski, 2017). Following the findings of Levitt, DeMooij & Hofstede, or likewise Engel et al. and Breitenacher, who stated that marketing activities influence consumer behavior and that due to the transformation of the global consumer, it is necessary to react on their requests, this approach to processing the calls for sustainability is a further step. It was assumed that a sustainable production method leads consumers to an increased consumption and thus to more sales. The product attributing "sustainable" carries an ever-increasing significance for the consumer (Nemetz, 2021; Soderbaum, 2012). This fact was therefore reviewed with regard to the purchase decision on confectionery. It turned out that this attribute by no means carries influence from the consumer’s perspective, as a purchase criterion in confectionery consumption, but it was rated as neutral. The results of the data on this product attribute were surprising because the life trend of today's generations indicates that sustainability is increasing in importance (Gierszewska & Seretny, 2019; Wang, Xu, Lee, & Li, 2022). It can thus be concluded that the basic attitude of the consumers towards the topic of sustainability may well be positive but cannot be transferred to confectionery consumption. It is rather an image that is drawn around a product that can have an influence on the purchase decision (Bernyte, 2021; Zhang & Watson IV, 2020). The further research question would therefore not be whether a product has been produced sustainably per se, but rather whether it has been made by a manufacturer who basically acts sustainably. The findings from the survey showed that the theses of Lucyna Witek, Grzegorz Maciejewski et al. as well as Mark Starik and Patricia Kanashiro—to name just a few—are absolutely correct to that effect that this criterion will play a greater role in the future than it has in the pas (Maciejewski et al., 2019; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013; Witek, 2019).

In addition to the research question of whether or not a sustainable production method would promote sales, the question was posed as to which product attributes exactly motivate consumers to purchase confectionery, which leads to the second research question in connection to the second hypothesis:

RQ 2 What are the consumers' preferences regarding a country criterion?

H 2 A country-specific production does not lead to higher demand of confectionery products.

The background to this question was to what extent there are similarities and differences in consumers' preferences in the respective countries. The study of confectionery characteristics was intended to show whether the approaches of Balick et al. could be applied and extended to include concrete product attributes. Balick et al. claimed that marketing strategies based on universals, rather than on differences, are beneficial. One of the findings in this regard was that taste is what matters most to consumers when it comes to confectionery. Following this awareness, activities on the part of the manufacturers can be used in a target-oriented manner. Examples of this include that a development of taste-varieties should be targeted, which generally find a large approval on the consumers' side. This was the core of the second research question, which aimed to find out what flavors in terms of confectionery consumers want. The findings confirmed that confectionery goods equally receive appeal beyond national borders. The block chocolate is very popular in all markets. The survey showed that this type of chocolate is favored by consumers in Germany, Poland, and Russia. The filled chocolate bars are highly popular in Poland and Russia. In Germany, the answers were spread over a somewhat wider range, but the majority also showed a positive signal in that direction. The same applies to the consumption of wafers. They are popular in all three markets. The survey revealed that only few market participants are happy with pralines. In Germany, Poland, and Russia, consumers tend to be neutral about this sweet. The findings regarding sugar confectionery were interesting. Here, consumers' preferences were asked about classic candies and jellies. The findings by country showed that the Russian market is particularly receptive to these products.

The results show that under certain circumstances, it can make sense to combine the markets to be served and that country-specific production does not contribute to increased demand. Thus, the insights of international marketing can be extended to the possibility of cross-border market conquest at the same time. This not only saves money, but also valuable resources.

The third research question, in connection to the third hypothesis, dealt with the differences and similarities in named age groups. The research should not only look at country borders and question the country-specific marketing approach but was extended to include the characteristic "age".

RQ 3 How have taste preferences in consumer segments changed over time?

H 3 An orientation on age clusters (generations) does not lead to higher demand of confectionery products.

Again, it was the results of Balick et al. on which the assumptions were based. These in turn aimed to elaborate and expand the knowledge in connection with Berkup's findings. The survey results and the subsequent subdivision into age groups revealed that when it comes to chocolate, different age groups of consumers agree. Analogous to the findings by country, traditional sweets are favored. Only in the case of pure sugar confectionery was there a deviation. Here it can be seen that candies, or lollipops, just like jellies are more popular with the younger market participants. Therefore, if companies want to specialize in making products for specific age groups, that still makes sense under certain conditions.

The last research question was aimed at the extent to which packaging variety plays a role, as the problem of choice was detected as another crucial aspect by researchers like Iyenegar and Lepper, Scheibehenne, Greifeneder and Todd, Sharma & Nair, Reutskaja and Hogarth. There was agreement on the fact that a high number of variants may lead to a state of stress and cause reactions that have not been targeted. Staying with the example of purchasing behavior, this means that in the worst case, no purchase is made at all. The following research question was posed in this connection and followed by hypothesis 4:

RQ 4 How do the consumers perceive a wide range of confectionery that may result in cognitive dissonance?

H 4 Consumers feel overwhelmed by the packaging variety.

On the packaging, confectionery manufacturers make clear if the production was climate-neutral or whether artificial ingredients are contained. The variety of packaging can also be used by manufacturers to imply that there is an equally wide range of products. The consumer, however, is overwhelmed by the large number of packaging options, as the research results show. Particularly in the case of confectionery, what matters to the consumer is the content (see findings on preferences for purchasing decisions). Basically, the consumer wants to recognize his favorite product everywhere, so that a variety of packaging is not target-oriented. The research results of this work line up with the findings of other researchers. The consumer is left unhappy when presented with too wide a range of different designs (Chauhan & Sagar, 2021; Chernev, Böckenholt, & Goodman, 2012; McShane & Böckenholt, 2018). Originally invented to generate more sales, this oversupply leads to dissatisfaction and even frustration (Cooper & Carlsmith, 2015; Festinger, 2020).

5.2. Theoretical implications

For the dissertation, literature was selected that allowed to move from a macro-perspective to the micro-perspective of the individual consumer. This process was necessary to create a broad understanding of consumer behavior as such. The historical approach and the explanations around the development of a consumer's habits were important, as they have a direct influence on purchasing behavior and allow conclusions to be drawn, which in turn lead to practical implementation examples on the management side. The present work substantiated the findings of previous studies in their approaches, since the confectionery industry itself has not been extensively studied in a scientific sense so far. Therefore, the results were intended to be an extended contribution to previous findings. In particular, the findings around the topic of sustainability are worth highlighting. From the theory that products should meet the needs of the consumer, the approach developed that strategies can be adapted to circumstances. This approach did not prove useful when it came to sustainability, as consumers today expect more transparency (e.g., about the origin of raw materials) and are no longer as gullible as they once were (Asioli et al., 2017; Maciejewski, Malinowska, Kucharska, Kucia, & Kolny, 2021). These findings go in line with the theory that can be found in basic literature such as, "*The SAGE Handbook of Consumer Culture*," or Hofstedes "*Interkulturelle Zusammenarbeit*" *(="Intercultural cooperation")* (Hofstede, 1993, p. 202; Kravets et al., 2018). There, it is described how phenomena of environmental awareness can be transferred to the consumer and thus directly affect the company's monetary earnings. Hofstede shared his findings on this (1993), as did Kravets et al. (2018). In the meantime, research did not stand still, but provided rich insights into marketing strategies that could have been applied and adapted around the research findings.

In the due course, a country-specific approach was investigated, since classical marketing strategies based their activities on the assumption that there are country-specific attributes to consider, when creating a product (Barat, 2009). However, there are product attributes that are equally of interest, beyond borders. In case of confectionery products, this is where opportunities open up for the manufacturers. If the commonalities of product preferences were examined in countries that were also similar in their purchasing power, the study showed, consumers could be equally satisfied. However, the efforts and momentum are enormous and would require a strong marketing concept. For innovations and investments in new technologies, the effort would be worthwhile (Arregle et al., 2021; Hanus, 2018; Surdu, Greve, & Benito, 2021).

Literature on differences in age groups exists in various industries and fields of research (Asioli et al., 2017; Anna M. Nikodemska-Wołowik et al., 2019). Related to confectionery alone, it tends to be market reports that show a trend and thus suggest to manufacturers that developing products by age group makes sense. In this paper, an attempt was made to see if this also applies to confectionery. It turned out that this approach is partly profitable, because minor deviations in taste preferences were elaborated in the case of pure sugar products (e.g., lollipops, hard candy). Taking this difference in taste into account, a more specific marketing strategy in connection to sales activities can be worked out and thus specifically target certain age groups. Therefore, another objective of the present study was to examine whether alternative marketing strategies could be developed that would appeal to a larger target group, so that manufacturing variants could be developed in the ongoing process that would make larger production slots achievable. It was found that this approach could result in a lucrative effort, as the responses of the present study underlined a higher interest in a product, in case it goes in line with the current age-related taste preference.

Finally, it was examined to what extent the approaches of Iyengar and Lepper (2000), Reutskaja and Hogarth (2009), and Scheibehenne et al. (2010) confirm or reject the results of the present study. The question about the perception of diversity in packaging, was based on their findings. They state that too large a number of choices, demotivates the person who has to make this decision and accordingly can lead to a decision that was not intended (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Reutskaja & Hogarth, 2009; Scheibehenne et al., 2010). In the case of confectionery and its packaging variety, these approaches could be confirmed across countries and ages. In addition, the answers in the present work led to the conclusion that the confectionery market is traditional, and that the familiar product tends to be consumed in this industry.

The theory goes one step further and the findings have been supplemented by new scientific studies on the subject. It was worked out that the consumer is even confused by the oversupply (Anninou, 2018; Chauhan & Sagar, 2021; McShane & Böckenholt, 2018). These findings could also be reflected in the confectionery industry.

5.3. Managerial implications

When it comes to the managerial implications, the findings of this thesis shall find approval on several levels: Across country borders and also age group-specific. If a manufacturer were to focus on product attributes that would be accepted in more markets, larger production slots could be used, and thus more consumers could be reached. In the long term, this approach would lead to more sustainable production, such as: fewer different raw materials would be required; and fewer rinsing masses would be produced at the manufacturing plant due to changes in the formulation. This also benefits the environment.

In terms of the confectionery industry, concentrating on the most favored products would tend to reduce production, as most confectionery manufacturers aim to offer as large and extensive a range as possible. For smaller companies with a focus on a certain age group, such an approach is feasible, but does not lead to capacity expansion in production and would therefore represent a limitation of the product range. The aspect of specialization would still need to be done in research regarding confectionery. There are too few academic studies of this industry from this point of view. In the further course, since the preferences by taste, or variety, did not reveal any significant differences within the age groups, an attempt was made to identify which age group had the greatest purchasing power and the greater potential. Following this question, the frequencies of the consumption and the situation around the consumption, were queried. It turned out that there are habits that could be considered. For example, sweets are hardly ever consumed in the morning as a substitute for breakfast. However, they are often used for relaxation. Thus, it depends on the industry whether a distinction by age group should be lived. In the case of confectionery, this would make sense for purely sugary products.

It can be concluded from the results that the confectionery market is traditional. There are hardly any discernible movements indicating a surprising turnaround in preferences. Depending on the financial situation, markets can be combined. The markets examined here were a good fit. Country differences are negligible for confectionery products, when it comes to the most favored sorts. A differentiation by age makes sense for sugar confectionery. In conclusion, the results may lead to the insight that companies producing chocolate should concentrate on the varieties they can produce in large quantities. Experiments with taste combinations as one may know from pralines, will not lead to increased sales, but could be a good option to keep the consumer interested and attentive. The confectionery market does not live on such innovations alone. Basically, the established varieties should always be offered, and highlights can be set through experiments in taste or design, so that the consumer continues to try out new things. These might be the spades (highs) of sales and a basic assortment continues its sales volume at the average level, while the production process can be planned in a more targeted manner and at least in this way does a good service to the environment.

Furthermore, contemporary companies may build better relationships with consumers, showing the environmental concerns resulting in more responsible buyer behavior. It can be based on dialogue regarding the current necessity of conscious consumption (for example "zero-waste" approach).

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1. Conclusions

Conclusions from this work were assigned to core findings based on the research questions and associated hypotheses. Table no. 18 gives an overview of the results with regard to the hypotheses formulated.

Table 18 Tabular overview of the results with regard to the hypotheses formulated

	Hypothesis	Accepted	Rejected
H1	Sustainable production of confectionery goods leads to increased consumption.		X
H2	A country-specific production does not lead to higher demand of confectionery products.	X	
H3	An orientation on age clusters (generations) does not lead to higher demand of confectionery products.	Partly accepted	
H4	Consumers feel overwhelmed by the packaging variety.	X	

Source: Own elaboration

One of the key findings for the confectionery market was the fact that this market is very traditional and the consumers´ habits are rather conventional. This was concluded from the results on the questions regarding influencing factors and product preferences. The buyers choose typical sorts of sweets: Block chocolate, filled chocolate and wafers. The main factor mentioned as decisive for the purchase decision was taste. This is surprising because it is actually price always cited as a lever for or against a purchase decision. So, if confectionery manufacturers were to give in to the desire for more, or more intense, taste, this could well lead to increased demand. However, to achieve better taste quality, investments are needed in higher-quality raw materials, modern machines, well-trained confectionery technologists and also in the time factor. After all, good things take time, or in other words “haste makes waste,” and this patience obviously pays off in the production of confectionery. In the due course, it would be necessary to break with the trend toward mass production and instead rely on a conche, which makes the melting behavior of the chocolate more delicate. The longer a sugar-cocoa mixture is conched, the better these substances can combine and the softer the chocolate melts when eaten. Another factor that has led to the finding that the confectionery market is traditional is that consumers have proven to be rather less willing to experiment. The more unusual a confection, the more restrained the feedback. This was particularly evident in the case of the praline. The praline is a grab bag of flavor ingredients, and if the consumer does not think carefully before deciding on a praline, he or she may be negatively surprised. The average confectionery consumer does not seem to be able or willing to muster this courage. It was also noticed that consumers like to buy confectionery that they know and, above all, recognize. This fact also suggested that experiments in taste or design are rather undesirable. In addition, the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance was detected, while confronting the consumer with a wide variety.

In summary, it is well worth asking consumers themselves before creating marketing strategies. These marketing strategies could also function independently of national borders, provided that markets were grouped into a cluster with similar purchasing power. Intentions to target specific age groups are only worthwhile for certain product types and could also be clustered for the most popular flavors regardless of age. If a manufacturer can then also score points with a sustainable way of thinking and acting, it is possible to convince a large group of buyers.

Table no. 19 presents a summarized view on the key results of the present work and major theories applied.

Table 19 Concluding overview of key results and connected major theories applied

Research questions and related hypotheses	Key results	Major theories applied
RQ 1 What motivates consumers to buy confectionery items, with regard to sustainability concept? H 1 Sustainable production of confectionery goods leads to increased consumption.	• Sustainable production method is not specifically expected. • Rather, it is a matter of fundamentally sustainable business methods conducted on the part of manufacturers. • Taste as leading reason to consume sweets.	• De Mooij, 1998 • De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011
RQ 2 What are the consumer preferences regarding a country criterion? H 2 A country-specific production does not lead to higher demand for confectionery products.	• Block chocolate is favored equally in all three markets. • Filled chocolates and wafers are also equally popular. • Markets with similar purchasing power can be processed as a unit on the marketing side.	• Cateora et al., 2011 • Usunier et al., 2020
RQ 3 How have taste preferences in consumer segments changed over time? H 3 An orientation on age-clusters (generations) does not lead to higher demand of confectionery products.	• Marketing efforts targeting leisure and in-between snacks. • Pure chocolate is favored by all age groups, followed by filled chocolates and wafers. • With regard to candy and jellies, investing in an age-optimized marketing campaign is recommendable.	• Cateora et al., 2011 • Usunier et al., 2020
RQ 4 How do the consumers perceive a wide range of confectionery that may result in cognitive dissonance? H 4 Consumers feel overwhelmed by the packaging variety.	• The variety of packaging makes consumers uncertain in their purchasing decisions. • Cognitive dissonance can also be observed in the purchase decision regarding confectionery products • The consumer does not want overly large variety.	• Leon Festinger, 1957 • Balick et. al, 2016

Source: Own elaboration

6.2. Limitations of the study

The compilation of the herein presented work was exposed to limitations, which are pointed out in the following. With a total size of n = 727 (although the first reach included more than 1,300 respondents) and a distribution in thirds for each market studied, the results brought with them variables that could be evaluated well, but it could be argued that a larger sample would have been more revealing. In addition, the distribution of participants by age group did not consider the age group of so-called α (alpha) consumers. This generation consists of the current children of market participants who, although not legally entitled to do so, indirectly influence the purchasing behavior of their legal guardians. Vice versa, this implies a further restriction with regard to the oldest market participants. They were not able to give their answers for the present study because they are hardly accessible for online surveys. Nonetheless, they engage in purchasing transactions that would have to be considered for the study of purchasing behavior and consumption.

Following this line, another limitation is that of the queried preferences in confectionery. The author has tried to mention the most common types of confectionery, however, there are specialties that could find place in further elaborations, so that also the existence of niche sorts would be queried by consumers in their personal ranking.

During the severe SARS-CoV-2 pandemic times, the access to the respondents was reduced. The respondents were reluctant to participate in the survey due to online work and other activities which demand long hours in front of the computer (Anna Maria Nikodemska-Wołowik, Wach, Andruszkiewicz, & Otukoya, 2021, p. 217).

6.3. Future research

Future studies could include other markets, so that in the end it would even be possible to obtain a global view of the confectionery market. This in turn could help to redefine this market completely independent of national borders.

Fundamentally, this study dealt with the extent to which sustainability plays a role in the production of confectionery. It was found that consumers do not expect production itself to be sustainable, but that it is much more the market processes that should be thought through in a sustainable way. This, in turn, is a finding that could be the subject of further investigation in future research questions, because how manufacturers intend to meet this demand is largely unclear today.

Secondly, another aspect is that of a marketing strategy for the special industry of confectionery products. Here, a research approach that incorporates the common findings from concrete industries (such as confectionery), has not been investigated yet. Therefore, whether the outcome of this present work can be transferred to other food industries remains questionable and needs investigation.

When it comes to age- and country-specific product development, further research in nuances of deviation is needed. This thesis incorporates confectionery items, but there is evidence that merging preferences is not the desired adaptation for every industry (Lytvynenko & Danylchenko, 2019). Therefore, depending on the targets of one's actions, more research is needed on other fields of interest.

Lastly, the perception of the high number of packaging variety was investigated. However, the perception of everyone can change quickly and the answers to the questions posed here are also subject to a gut feeling that can be one way today and another tomorrow. If the consumer is curious and motivated to find out what the market has to offer, he or she will also look at new products or new packaging. In addition, confectionery is also bought for specific occasions. The study made it clear that confectionery is generally bought for oneself, but also sometimes for a specific purpose. At this point, the studies could be expanded to include this criterion and take up research questions that deal with the motivation behind the purchase.

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APPENDIX I

Original Questionnaire (English version)

Page 1

Dear Sir or Madam!

I would be grateful if you would take about 10 minutes to fill out the following survey. You could provide me with important information that I need for my scientific work. This work refers to changes in eating habits / consumption differences between German, Polish and Russian consumers on the confectionery market.

Your answers are voluntary, anonymous and confidential. All answers will be collected together and analyzed as a group. I kindly ask you to answer as honestly as possible.

Thank you very much!

Anna Brack

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1. How many people live in your household? (ID03)

Please choose.

- ID03_01 = 1 person household
- ID03_02 = 2 persons household
- ID03_03 = 3 persons household
- ID03_04 = 4 persons household
- ID03_05 = 5 persons household
- ID03_06 = 6 persons household
- ID03_07 = more than 6 persons household
- ID03_08 = I do not have an own household
- -9 = not answered

2. How many children live in your household? (ID04)

Please choose (selection list exposed)

- ID04_01 = There are no children living in my household
- ID04_02 = 1 child
- ID04_03 = 2 children
- ID04_04 = 3 children
- ID04_05 = 4 children
- ID04_06 = more than 4 children
- ID04_07 = more than 6 persons household
- -9 = not answered

3. Who mainly does the grocery shopping? (ID05)

- ID05_01 = Myself
- ID05_02 = My wife / husband, resp. my partner
- ID05_03 = Other family members
- ID05_04 = Hard to say, as it changes
- ID05_05 = Someone completely different, outside the family
- -9 = not answered

4. For whom or in what situations do you buy sweets? (ID07)

You can select multiple responses.

- ID07_01 = For me
- ID07_02 = For my housemates
- ID07_03 = For the children
- ID07_04 = As a present
- ID07_05 = For a special event (e.g., farewell to colleagues, anniversary / jubilee celebration, or something similar)
- ID07_06 = I don´t know. I cannot answer.

5. How much sweets do you consume per week? This question refers to your personal consumption. (ID06)

Note: Packed sweets, available at grocery stores, coming directly from the producer, are meant. Not coming from a pastry shop or bakery.

Please note that an approximate average value is sufficient.

- ID06_05 = I don´t know
- ID06_07 = I do not eat sweets myself
- ID06_06 = Less than 1 block of chocolate / alternatively: Less than 1 bag of sweets (containing approx. 100g)
- ID06_01 = 1 block of chocolate / alternatively: 1 bag of sweets (approx. 100g)

- ID06_02 = 2-3 blocks of chocolate / alternatively: 2-3 bags of sweets (each approx. 100g)
- ID06_03 = 4-5 blocks of chocolate / alternatively: 4-5 bags of sweets (each approx. 100g)
- ID06_04 = More than 5 blocks of chocolate / alternatively: More than 5 bags of sweets (each approx. 100g)
- -9 = not answered

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6. Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 how much you like the following products...

The middle of the scale means a neutral answer: neither, nor. (FV03)

5 items, Likert scale from 1 (I don´t like it at all) to 5 (I love it!)

- FV03_01 = Pure chocolate block
- FV03_02 = Filled chocolate bar
- FV03_03 = Waffles
- FV03_04 = Pralines
- FV03_05 = Candy
- FV03_06 = Jellies / Gummies

7. In which situations do you usually eat sweets? (HB01)

Ordinal scale:

1 = Not at all

2 = 1 time a week

3 = 2-3 times a week

4 = 4-5 times a week

5 = 6-7 times a week

-9 = Not answered

5. HB01_02 = In the morning, as a small breakfast
6. HB01_03 = As a reward
7. HB01_04 = Just like that. For no reason. In between.
8. HB01_05 = After lunch
9. HB01_01 = While recreation / relaxing

10. HB01_06 = As a tiny snack
11. HB01_07 = After a physical effort (e.g. after sports, after working in the garden, or after cleaning the apartment)

8. Please rate the following characteristics of a confectionery product as such. What features have an impact on your buying decision? (HB02)

The middle of the scale means a neutral answer: neither, nor.

5 items, Likert scale from 1 (completely insignificant impact) to 5 (significant impact)

- HB02_01 = Ingredients
- HB02_02 = Preservatives
- HB02_04 = Taste
- HB02_05 = Price
- HB02_06 = Other

9. Please rate the following characteristics of the packaging. What features have an impact on your buying decision? (HB03)

The middle of the scale means a neutral answer: neither, nor.

5 items, Likert scale from 1 (completely insignificant impact) to 5 (significant impact)

- HB03_01 = Protects the product
- HB03_02 = High-quality packaging is an indicator of product quality.
- HB03_03 = Packaging should have a gift character / chic for present.
- HB03_04 = Visible brand of the product
- HB03_05 = Other

10. What elements that affect the price of sweets are of importance to you? (HB04)

Please evaluate the following characteristics on a scale from 1 to 5, whereas the middle indicates a neutral answer: neither, nor.

5 items, Likert scale from 1 (Insignificant) to 5 (Crucial)

- HB04_01 = Price itself
- HB04_02 = Promotions
- HB04_03 = Information regarding sustainability (e.g. ""fair trade"")
- HB04_04 = Attributes corresponding to the of the way of life and nutrition (e.g. bio, vegan etc)

11. In which direction has your candy consumption changed since you had children? (KD02)

- KD02_01 = Consumption of sweets has become less
- KD02_02 = Consumption of sweets has become more
- KD02_03 = Unchanged
- KD02_04 = I don't know
- KD02_05 = Not applicable. I do not have children.

12. Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5... (KD03)

The middle of the scale means a neutral answer: neither, nor.

5 items, Likert scale from 1 (Have become worse) to 5 (Have become better)
- KD03_01 = How do you rate modern sweets compared to the sweets you know from your childhood?

13. When it comes to variety / diversity of products: (OP01)

Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 how much you agree with the following statements...

The middle of the scale means a neutral answer: neither, nor.

5 items, Likert scale from 1 (I do not agree at all) to 5 (I totally agree)
- OP01_01 = The variety is too great. In some cases, hardly any differences are recognizable
- OP01_02 = The diversity could be expanded even further

14. When it comes to design: (OP02)

Do you agree with the following sentences…?

5 items, Likert scale from 1 (I do not agree at all) to 5 (I totally agree)
- OP02_01 = I do not pay attention to the wrapping at all
- OP02_02 = I like a wrapping which I recognize in the shelf, no matter where I am
- OP02_04 = I wish the wrapping would change more often
- OP02_06 = I always buy sweets of the same brand, no matter how the packaging changes
- OP02_08 = The choice of products with similar characteristics is too large
- OP02_09 = It bothers me if the packaging changes

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15. Have you ever contacted a producer of sweets? (OP04)

- OP04_01 = No, never
- OP04_02 = Yes, but only once
- OP04_03 = Yes, more than one time
- OP04_04 = No, but I will do so shall there be a reason for it
- OP04_05 = No, and I would not do it in future
- OP04_06 = I don't know / I cannot remember

16. Which way did you take to contact the manufacturer? (OP07)

- OP07_01 = Face-to-face contact
- OP07_02 = By postal letter
- OP07_03 = By email
- OP07_04 = By phone
- OP07_05 = Via social media
- OP07_06 = Other
- OP07_07 = Not applicable. I did not contact a manufacturer, yet.

17. Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5: To what extent do the following advertising mediums influence your purchase decision? (OP05)

The middle part of the scale means a neutral answer: neither, nor.

5 items, Likert scale from 1 (No influence at all) to 5 (Very high level of influence)

- OP05_01 = Cinema advertisement
- OP05_02 = Social media
- OP05_03 = Billboards
- OP05_04 = Advertisements on TV
- OP05_05 = Radio advertisement
- OP05_06 = Advertising banners on the Internet

18. When it comes to communication channels in advertising, what has the greater influence on your purchase decision? (OP06)

Please choose one.

- OP06_01 = Traditional media (Radio, TV ads., etc).
- OP06_02 = Internet media (Instagram, Twitter, blogs, etc).

19. Where do you live? (C101)

- C101_01 = Germany
- C101_02 = Poland
- C101_03 = Russia
- C101_04 = Other

20. Have you ever lived abroad or do you live abroad? (C103)

You can select multiple answers if necessary.

- [ ] C103_01 = No, I have never lived abroad
- [ ] C103_02 = Yes, I lived in Germany
- [ ] C103_07 = Yes, I lived in Poland
- [ ] C103_10 = Yes, I lived in Russia
- [ ] C103_14 = Yes, I lived in a country other than those mentioned above

21. How long have you lived abroad? (C107)

- C107_01 = For less than 1 year
- C107_02 = 1-3 years
- C107_03 = For more than 3 years
- C107_04 = Not applicable, I have never lived abroad

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22. How would you describe your financial situation? (C104)

Against the background of average earnings to your friends. Please choose...

- C104_01 = Very Bad

- C104_02 = Bad
- C104_05 = Neither good nor bad
- C104_03 = Good
- C104_04 = Very good

23. Your gender (C105)

Choose from the list (expanded):

- C105_01 = Female
- C105_02 = Male
- C105_03 = Other

24. Your year of birth? (C106)

Please choose from the list (expanded):

- C106_01 = 2002
- C106_02 = 2001
- C106_03 = 2000
- C106_04 = 1999
- C106_05 = 1998
- C106_06 = 1997
- C106_07 = 1996
- C106_08 = 1995
- C106_09 = 1994
- C106_10 = 1993
- C106_11 = 1992
- C106_12 = 1991
- C106_13 = 1990
- C106_14 = 1989
- C106_15 = 1988
- C106_16 = 1987
- C106_17 = 1986
- C106_18 = 1985
- C106_19 = 1984
- C106_20 = 1983
- C106_21 = 1982
- C106_22 = 1981
- C106_23 = 1980
- C106_24 = 1979
- C106_25 = 1978
- C106_26 = 1977
- C106_27 = 1976

- C106_28 = 1975
- C106_29 = 1974
- C106_30 = 1973
- C106_31 = 1972
- C106_32 = 1971
- C106_33 = 1970
- C106_34 = 1969
- C106_35 = 1968
- C106_36 = 1967
- C106_37 = 1966
- C106_38 = 1965
- C106_39 = 1964
- C106_40 = 1963
- C106_41 = 1962
- C106_42 = 1961
- C106_43 = 1960
- C106_44 = 1959
- C106_45 = 1958
- C106_46 = 1957
- C106_47 = 1956
- C106_48 = 1955
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- C106_60 = 1943
- C106_61 = 1942
- C106_62 = 1941
- C106_63 = 1940
- C106_64 = 1939
- C106_65 = 1938
- C106_66 = 1937
- C106_67 = 1936
- C106_68 = 1935
- C106_69 = 1934
- C106_70 = 1933
- C106_71 = 1932
- C106_72 = 1931
- C106_73 = 1930

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

Your answers were transmitted, you may close the browser window or tab now.